

RULES

FOR PRESERVING THE

HEALTH OF THE AGED,

BY MEANS OF

AIR, CLOTHING, DIET,

Employment, The Evacuations, &c. &c.

AND ALSO HINTS FOR THE ALLEVIATION AND PREVENTION OF THOSE DISORDERS BY WHICH OLD AGE IS USUALLY ASSAILED,

WITHOUT THE AID OF MEDICINE.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF

J. A. SALGUES,

Physician, and Professor of Anatomy, Physiology, &c. &c. to the Institute of France.

" Man, tottering and feeble at both extremes of life, is equally in need of support; whilst the *old man*, in addition, requires the aid of consolation."

PREFACE.

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INTRODUCTION.

The destruction of time, like the production of nature, is everlasting. All creatures, whether animate or inanimate, which abound in this our globe, have their term of existence succeeded by death and annihilation. This is a law of nature, from which no one is exempt; and, as was said by the eloquent author of the Etudes de la Nature —"The stream of human life affords no haven for anchorage; the rapid current carries away both him who would rashly struggle against its course, and him who abandons himself to its billows."

Notwithstanding this irrevocable decree, there is hardly any effort to which man has not recourse, to escape this terrible moment, or to retard its approach. He, even

to whom this world is a burthen, shrinks from this opportunity of terminating his woes, although to him may be more particularly applied what Pliny said of all mankind, that a short life is nature's best gift. "*Natura vero nihil hominibus brevitate vitæ præstitit melius.*" But death, how much soever dreaded by man, and notwithstanding all the precautions he may take to escape it, must arrive, sooner or later; man's faculties fail him successively; and he has generally reached old age before he recollects that his thread is nearly spun, and that soon he will be no more.

It may not, however, be impossible for man to retard this awful moment. In most cases, he might secure to himself a longer and more certain period of existence, and spare himself the lingering death caused by his errors, and the irregularity of his passions. But led on by his habits, his tastes, the pleasures of the world, and his own intemperance, man shuts his eyes to

the evils that threaten him, as if they could never reach him. The extreme irregularity of our habits of life, the idleness of some, and the excessive exertion of others; the many excitements and modes of gratifying our appetites which present themselves; the luxurious food of the rich, the heating juices of which load them with indigestions; the wretched pittance of the poor, but too often denied them, and which induces them, in a moment of plenty, voraciously to overload their stomachs; late hours and excesses of every description; the immoderate transports of our passions; fatigue and exhaustion of mind; the innumerable sorrows and anxieties of every state of life, by which the constitution is perpetually worn away; such are the melancholy proofs that we are ourselves the authors of most of our complaints; and that had we followed the simple and uniform mode of life which Nature dictates, we might have avoided them all.

When we reflect on such follies, we might also be tempted to think that there are many who find pleasure in a life of anguish and anxiety; and that, like Pascal, they consider a state of disease and pain the most fitting for the contemplative species.

The man whose old age draws near to a close, still seeking by some means to arrest the progress of time, and to withhold for a few moments longer the victim of an inevitable sacrifice, will have his frailty ever present to his imagination; to him nothing is indifferent, and that which the individual in the full enjoyment of his faculties scarcely heeds, fills him with the most fearful forebodings, or is, in his eyes, the sure precursor of the most alarming disorders.

He will find it incumbent upon him to watch attentively over himself, and thoroughly to understand the connexion that Nature has established between him and the things made for his use, or on

which he finds himself dependant. Less tormented by the force of his passions, rich in a long experience, he will then be able, better than at any other age, to appreciate whatever presents to him matter for hope or fear. This study appertains to the art of preserving health, a science which multiplies the enjoyments of man by making him acquainted with the means of securing that first blessing, and which alleviates his misfortunes by teaching him to prevent his disorders. This study, by far too much neglected in the present age, was held in the highest estimation by the ancients, who appreciated its advantages: we see Socrates warmly urging his pupils to study whatever concerned health, and pointing out to them how ridiculous it was that a well informed man should not be perfectly ac quainted with whatever concerned his exercise, his food and drink; and that he should not know better than his physicians what was good or bad for him.

But if this science should be, in some degree, a common acquisition; if it be important that its principles should be known by all, it is by no means so with the science of medicine, properly so called; an art which has for its end a knowledge of the nature of disorders, of their symptoms, their progress, their complication and mode of cure. In this case, much instruction, a strong mind, and sound sense, are necessary to distinguish truth from error, right from wrong; and to avoid mistakes which might be productive of the most dangerous consequences.

Who, too, can be ignorant that the study of medical works is capable of inducing hypochondriacal feelings, if the reader has not made the science his specific study? It even, occasionally, excites a sort of despair, the unfortunate result of the persuasion acquired, that life can be nothing but a series of anxieties and pains, and that multiplied disorders may place it every mo-

ment in danger. Tulpius cites the case of a man, of an indolent habit, who lost his reason from a too constant perusal of medical and surgical works. All medical men know the history of another individual, who, while attending at Leyden the lectures of Boerhaave, soon fancied himself attacked with every malady on which that great man had addressed his auditors. We have not so many works on the health of the aged, as on that of all the other stages of life, but particularly on that of children. Man, however, tottering and feeble, at both extremes of life, is equally in need of support, whilst the old man, in addition, stands in need of consolation. This is the remark of a celebrated physician of the present day; and it does as much honour to his heart as his labours warrant the respect his brethren entertain for his extensive information.

The very incomplete fragments which we possess on the art of preserving health in old age are written, some in Latin, a

tongue not known by all classes of society; some in modern languages, but containing, for the most part, only some hints on one or two branches of the science, in many instances presenting much that is doubtful or even erroneous.

The work I offer to my readers is divided into two principal heads. The first points out the rules and means of preserving the health that the aged already enjoy. In it will be found every thing relating to air, clothing, diet, the evacuations, employment, rest, hours of working and sleeping, sentiments, affections and passions.

In the second, I have applied these different rules to the most usual disorders concomitant on old age. The martyr to gout, rheumatism, asthma, piles, &c., will there find an account of those natural objects best adapted to him, and always more certain in their effect, against pain and suffering, than all the drugs of the Pharmacopœia.

I have proceeded no further, having throughout avoided offering any mode of cure. I should otherwise have failed in the end I have in view in this work, which professes only to point out to those of an advanced age, what is absolutely necessary for the preservation of their health, or to alleviate their disorders by gentle expedients, and even sometimes to cure them without medical aid.

This work has no analogy with those of Tissot or Buchan, authors too distinguished for me to attempt to compete with. I will even add, with Montaigne, "The man who would attempt to enter the lists with such highly talented individuals, must have no slight confidence in himself. For my own part, I decline such an unequal contest."

CHAP. I.

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS.

SECTION I.

Human life is by no means uniform throughout its whole course. It presents such different characteristics in its various stages, that to obtain a perfect knowledge of it, it must be studied in its morning, its meridian, and its decline. Each of these stages, too, presents itself under different aspects, and the most inexperienced eye must perceive the dissimilarity of their appearances, considered in their commencement, their height, and their end. Of this, old age, the last period of human life, prelude of death, offers us a remarkable example. Indeed, what an immense differ-

ence do we not perceive, in a physical and moral point of view, between that man, whose few gray hairs and deteriorated health announce an approaching change, and him who, sinking under a weight of years, weak and debilitated, his body bent to the earth, seems to invoke a speedy death, which appears almost necessary to him.

Old age does not arrive at the same period of life. Men yield to its influence sooner or later, according to their temperament, the strength of their constitutions, the habitual good or bad state of their health, the nature of their early education, their mode of life or nature of employment, state of idleness or activity, habits, the climate, the nature of the soil they inhabit, their passions; in a word, according to the good or bad use they have made of life and its precious faculties. Man generally feels the inroads of old age about his fiftieth year. Every thing then announces to him

the important changes he is about to undergo. Its distinguishing marks are at first but light and hardly perceptible; but they do not long remain so. At sixty, they are general and well defined. Lastly, at seventy, decrepitude, the last term of human existence, assails him. But, as we have already stated, long before his arrival at this æra, man should no longer doubt that nature has resolved one day to afflict him with it. He is ever reminded of it by the continually increasing difficulty and languor he experiences in the exercise of his vital functions, and the development of innumerable indispositions, which oblige him to husband his strength. At that period, to use the words of Horace, each revolving year makes some little but gradual inroad, and deprives him, more or less quickly, of some of his advantages :—

"Singula de nobis anni prædantur euntes."

Let us contemplate the gradual progress of this decay. First the solids, almost im-

perceptibly, wither; the flesh becomes harder and more compact; the movements more difficult and feeble; the skin loses its softness, smoothness and flexibility, becoming dry, rough, and flabby; wrinkles begin to furrow the forehead and cheeks; the hair becomes white and falls; the countenance loses its dignity, and changes its form and expression; the cheeks become colourless; worn out by time, grief, and disease, the features of the man far advanced in years become sad and fixed, expressing with difficulty the passions which agitate him; his teeth decay, loosen and fall out. Do his years increase? his body sinks and inclines to the earth; palsy, in a greater or less degree, affects all the limbs of this monarch of nature; even his head, which he can no longer raise towards heaven. His feelings are blunted, his senses vitiated, sluggish, weak, or lost. His eye, dull and heavy, sees with difficulty. Dead, in a physical and moral point of view, nature, al-

ways beneficent, seeks to hide from him the moment that must restore him to the dust he sprang from. His hearing becomes affected, and deafness at last hinders his receiving the adieus of life. His fingers, dry and weak, are powerless. To him food has no flavour, flowers no perfume. His pulse is low and weak; his secretions imperfect or vitiated; the generative impulse is gone, all his admirable faculties abandon him; his memory fails, his conception is tardy; his judgment doubtful; his will undecided; his imagination eclipsed. Reason, which constituted the pride of man, and raised him above the brute creation, exists no longer. In this painful state, the very feelings of the heart are weakened; and, as Charon says, "Old age, in some cases, imprints more wrinkles in the mind than on the countenance; for with the body, the mind and heart decay and vitiate."

But let us examine, succinctly, the various circumstances influencing the develop-

ment, and more or less rapid progress of old age, and speak first of the influence

OF TEMPERAMENT.

This has a material influence in advancing or retarding the development of old age, though, in general, its influence has been but too little studied. Bacon, however, has said, that of all others a melancholy temperament was the most favourable to longevity; but if we consult experience, it appears to accord but little with the opinion of this great man. Who, for instance, has seen a man of melancholy habits in his fortieth year? Already the wrinkles of his brow, the dryness of his skin, the leanness of his limbs, the habitual moroseness of his character, announce a premature old age. It is, perhaps, in the temperament, formed by the happy alliance of the sanguine and lymphatic, that we must seek the greatest number of old men. He alone who may be of an excessive fat-

ness will be an exception. More than twenty ages ago, Hippocrates stated his opinion to be, that persons of this habit were not likely to attain old age.

CONSTITUTION.

Delicate and nervous persons daily shew us that they have an equal chance of long life with those gifted with the strength of Hercules. Athletic men seldom attain an advanced age, because, for the most part, their disorders are more or less severe, or more frequent than those of a different temperament. Led away, too, by the knowledge of their strength, they abandon themselves more readily in their daily avocations to an excess, which is sooner or later fraught with the worst consequences to them.

It is an observable truth, that there are many persons who receive a strong hereditary disposition to longevity. I knew a family, four in number, the youngest of

whom was eighty years old, and their father and mother had each reached upwards of one hundred years.

AN HABITUAL STATE OF GOOD OR BAD HEALTH.

Health, that first blessing of a good organization, by maintaining a perfect harmony in all the vital faculties, enables them the longer to resist the attacks of illness. Frequent indispositions, on the other hand, announce a vitiated organization, and gives us less reason to expect a long old age. These indispositions also react on the instruments of life, and impair its strength. A short life is not the inevitable consequence of a weak constitution; for instance, the great age to which Cicero, Galen, Plutarch, Pope, Fontenelle, Voltaire, and a thousand others attained.

EDUCATION.

Nothing has a greater influence over the

frame of man, his strength, and the period of his existence than this. We know how attentively the Greeks, Romans, and Spartans, considered this point. Contemporary authors have informed us, that by a manly and severe education they acquired not only great strength, but a particular resistance to disease, and an astonishing disposition to longevity.

MODE OF LIFE.

Sobriety, or excessive intemperance offer us also very different results, when we examine their effect upon long life. A sober habit keeps all the functions in a state of regularity, which prevents the premature development of old age, and prolongs it much beyond its ordinary term. Cornaro affords one of the most striking, amongst a thousand proofs of this truth. But with intemperance the case is widely different; it speedily consumes the principles of life; it hastens a speedy destruction, and seldom

allows the attainment of the ultimate period of human existence, because it urges the organs into excessive action. Anacreon, Petronius, and some other "*good fellows*," lived, it is true, sufficiently long to form exceptions to this important rule; but these exceptions do not lessen the advantages of sobriety, borne out by examples numerous enough to refute all the captious arguments of any champion of intemperance.

EMPLOYMENT.

The nature of the employment which is habitual, and the bodily or mental efforts it requires, have a wonderful effect on the duration of life.

How many persons are there who are devoted to working substances generating mephitic gases, dangerous elements of a crowd of accidents too often mortal. How feeble, then, are the rights they would have had, without these occupations, to a happy and long old age!

Violent exercises, which require great manual force, are no less fatal to many. Every one must have remarked the rapid decline of those who are obliged thus to employ themselves. Intellectual exertions, if excessive, and combined with a taste for a sedentary life, weaken the vital powers, and prevent them from performing their functions regularly or permanently. To render these labours harmless, they must be moderate, occasionally diversified by gentle exercise; and, above all, aided by the most constant temperance. In such cases, activity of mind, by gently stimulating all the organs, and augmenting their energy and action, gives a degree of tenacity to the principle of life, which is never to be found in indolent persons. Plato made this important remark. Supported by his opinion, we may cite the example of all the great men who, by the uninterrupted activity of their intellectual faculties, reached the utmost term of the human life, viz.,

Homer, Democritus, Hippocrates, Parmenides, Plato, Socrates, Georgias of Leontium, Sophocles, Pindar, Anacreon, Plutarch, Aldrovandi, Galileo, Bacon, Harvey, Bayle, Locke, Leibnitz, Newton, and Boerhaave.

HABITS.

So considerable is their influence, that a Latin author has said it exercises the most extensive power over the human race, "gravissimum est imperium consuetudinis." The man who, favoured by fortune, has been enabled to procure enjoyments and pleasures, without which he can no longer subsist, will soon perish, if, reduced to poverty, he is forced into habits contrary to his former ones. Hippocrates says, ancient habits, though bad, are less troublesome than things to which we are not used. We should be careful, therefore, only to contract the new ones by degrees, if we would avoid disagreeable consequences. "*Use,*"

says Montaigne, "*is a second nature, whose caprices we must respect more than we are aware of.*" The man who has many habits, if he finds it an impossibility to preserve them all, and if he must abandon them speedily, will have more to fear for his health or life than the prudent man who can render himself independent of their tyranny.

CLIMATE.

We may consider temperate climates as most favourable to longevity. The inhabitants of mountainous districts live longer than those who inhabit a flat country, but more especially a damp one. Buffon assures us, and with justice, that the greatest number of old men is to be found in the mountains of Scotland, of Wales, of Auvergne, Switzerland, &c. &c., and not in the plains of Holland, Flanders, and Poland. Two men who, in latter ages, have attained the most advanced periods of life, namely,

Henry Jenkins, who died in 1670, at the age of 169; and Thomas Parr, at 152 years, were inhabitants of the mountainous parts of England.

Inhabitants of islands, or of places near the sea, are more time-proof than those who dwell in the midst of vast Continents. All must be aware, that the countries most remarkable for the longevity of their natives, are the Isles of Ceylon, the Arcades, the Hebrides, Ireland, Norway, &c. Can this phenomenon be caused by the greater purity of the air of the sea and its coasts, as Ingenhouz supposes? I believe the reason to be little known. Lastly, observation already shews us, that the individuals who have reached a great age, healthy, strong, gay and cheerful, ignorant of the infirmities of old age, are the inhabitants of villages, hamlets, and farms, and who, far from cities, have lived on milk, vegetables, bread, but little meat, and that plainly dressed, water and little wine.

THE PASSIONS.

Juvenal has said that nothing was more favourable for the health of the body than the preservation of that of the mind: "*Optandum ut sit mens sana incorpore sano.*" This maxim is most strictly true. He that experiences neither the violent passions of joy, nor painful thoughts of a profound melancholy, and whose life is not troubled by sudden vicissitudes, may look forward to a long and happy old age. The man of nature, who lives in all the simplicity of the ancient manners, has, in this respect, immense advantages over him who is a slave to all the excesses that take their birth amidst society. There, unhappily, we can seldom uniformly preserve that just medium, that regular employment of our faculties. His own enemy, man passes his life in search of new wants, which he cannot always satisfy. Thence spring moroseness, anxiety, chagrin, even despair,

which unceasingly torment his painful existence, and too often destroy him long before the time allotted by nature.

SECTION II.

TEMPERAMENTS AND CONSTITUTION OF THE AGED.

All men are apparently organized alike. All present the same number of organs, endowed with the same faculties, charged with the same actions, subservient to the same functions. Each of these organs offers to the enquirer the same texture; the same distribution of its vessels and nerves; the same arrangement in its parts. Yet, when we consider all men individually, we plainly see in some the blood-vessels much more developed than in others: in one, the nervous system predominates; in another, the muscular; in another, the liver and its dependencies, &c. The degree of activity of

each of these organs, independent of their volume, may also differ much; and from these differences spring impulses, directions, particular movements, modifications of all the functions; whence results, in each individual, a mode of existence peculiar to him alone, an individual temperament. The ancients acknowledged only four principal temperaments; decidedly a greater number exists; amongst them some are innate, whilst others may be called acquired temperaments, because they only develope themselves in the course of life, and are always the result either of the progress of age, or of the circumstances in the midst of which man more habitually finds himself.

In fact, the kind of life, nature of employment, food, climate, &c., may have much influence on the development of certain temperaments, so far even as to eradicate those to which man has been inclined from his infancy. Observing persons have related thousands of examples of this

truth; but let us confine ourselves to the effect of different ages on the temperament.

No medical man can be ignorant of the prodigious difference between the physical and moral characteristics of the adult, and those of the child and old person. How greatly, we may say, does the same individual differ from himself in these three great stages of existence!

Let us look at infancy; we must observe the strongly marked predominance of the lymphatic vessels, and of that wonderful network which composes and unites all the instruments of life, known by the name of cellular tissues. All their organs are lubricated with juices, which impart to them the softness and flexibility for which that age is remarkable; their forms have more roundness and activity, but their strength is much inferior. The blood-vessels of the adult, on the other hand, are very powerfully developed, their lungs very large and

endowed with great energy, the muscles very strongly marked, the solids supple, but firm and highly elastic; possessing less mobility than in childhood, but a strength much greater and more regular, and capable of the greatest efforts.

With the person advanced in years, the case is very different. Throughout his frame we perceive nothing but weakness, inaction, or a greater or less decay of the organic system; the abdominal viscera alone preserve some degree of strength, indeed, in some, they are excessively active, as the insatiable appetite of many old persons clearly demonstrate. Daily observation convinces us that it is towards the age of fifty, when man has escaped habitual bad health, that he becomes a slave to his appetite, and that the pleasures of the table constitute his greatest enjoyment. At this time of life, appear in a more marked manner those voluptuous epicures, who bowing incessantly to the shrines of Bacchus

and Momus, obtain, as the reward of their sacrifices, only the most painful indispositions, and the certainty of a speedier death. This predominance of the abdominal viscera in the old man, the decay of his nerves, the torpor of his senses, the diminution of his physical sensibility, affect also his moral character, and the sentiments of his mind. Is it not, indeed, to these various phenomena that we are to attribute his habitual taciturnity, his sombre moroseness, and many other failings which happily do not take possession of all who have attained this stage of life.

But if the temperament of the old man is not analogous to that which he possessed in the previous grades of life; if his faculties have undergone important modifications; if his constitution is less robust; if he is less capable of great exertion, he should consider himself a new actor, whose part is materially changed on the stage of life, and requires a new study. He should

not forget that the links of the chain which attaches him to life are much worn, and that what was at one period favourable to his existence, may now produce in him pain, anxiety, or death. Most old persons can hardly persuade themselves of these important changes; either from self-love or indolence, they will neither confess to themselves or others, that the hand of time has marked them; they wish to abuse life as they have done in their youth, forgetting that if, at any period, excess is dangerous, at their stage of life it is fatal. The old person, who has sense to appreciate his new state, and submits with discretion to an irresistible destiny, no longer attempting to dictate to nature, will live long, happy in the enjoyment of health, and dear to all around him.

CAN LIFE BE PROLONGED MUCH BEYOND THE ORDINARY COURSE OF NATURE?

In all ages, and amongst all nations, man has constantly exercised his invention to find some means of prolonging his existence, of fostering the flame of life, and of retarding the progressive approach of death. But in these long researches, too much inclined to error and self-delusion, he has seldom called to his aid the light of reason and the dictates of experience. Generally speaking, he has preferred, to gain this end, giving himself up to all the illusions of his upstart fancy, and to the suggestions of his vanity and self-love.

The Eastern nations were the first to imagine, that by the assistance of some peculiar practices, they could shield themselves from death, or retard its attacks. The people of modern Europe were not long in following their example; some self-

sufficient, ignorant beings, as bold as imprudent, acquired a speedy ascendancy over the minds of the credulous. Immortality was, every where, publicly promised, and persons hurried in crowds to barter their happiness and money for health *.

No animal, vegetable, or mineral substance has been overlooked or left unproposed by these empirics, to ensure immortality. One, in an unintelligible jargon, boasted gold and its innumerable preparations. Another was lost in his praises of the properties of the emerald, coral, and hyacinth. A third did not hesitate, in his enthusiasm, to hold forth with the same view, the virtues of the excrements of different animals, and the most extravagant compounds of a disgusting pharmacy. Error and ignorance did not stop here, but re-

* Mountebanks have never been deficient in any age; for, according to the admirable La Fontaine—

"Cette science, de tout temps,
"Fut en professeurs très-fertile."

sorted to the most barbarous and absurd expedients. An author, for instance, quoted by Bacon, had the effrontery to recommend to an old man, probably rich and powerful, a perfect restoration to youth and health, by sucking blood drawn from the arm of a healthy and vigorous young man. The physician who could propose such a remedy must have been as stupid as barbarous, and well fitted to practise amongst a race of cannibals.

Nor can we be silent on the advice given by some physicians of the earlier ages to feeble old men, that of sharing their beds with girls of a young, healthy, and robust habit. This counsel is decidedly a very pleasing, but unfortunately not a very practicable one. Youth does not love old age and wrinkles; and every one is not sufficiently richly endowed by Fortune, to be enabled to purchase its embraces. Boerhaave, however, tells us, that he recommended an old decrepid burgomaster of

Amsterdam, to *sleep* between two young persons; and that this old man, who before was ready to sink under his infirmities, recovered, in a great measure, his strength and gaiety. Galen had previously tried this course with a patient, and with equal success. It is to the imagination, excited by so pleasing a situation, and to the delicious warmth instilled by the object, that we may, in all probability, attribute cures, otherwise very rare. Both are of a nature calculated to retain the perishing spark of age, and preserve it in this state of renovation, especially when assisted in their action by a good regimen. None can be ignorant of the experiment of the transfusion of blood, a discovery so astonishing as to promise man strength to brave the attacks of ages. The blood of a calf injected into a man's veins, was to restore him to the freshness and strength of youth, even to its freedom from care, and its vivacity of imagination and thought. Time

and experience alone have done justice to these follies.

Venesection was not to pass unnoticed by these modern Promethei. Prescribed by them, at first, as an universal remedy, they soon saw in it the true and only means of prolonging life. Others, led away by their doctrines, were as positive in opinion, in persuading the minds of the weak, that no more cruel enemy could be found than this cherishing liquid, which fills the veins, and that the prudent could not take precautions enough against what they were pleased to call its dangerous influence. These were the tenets of Sylva and Botal, whose sanguinary system, most happily, no longer finds any adherents.

Hecquet, a rival well worthy of them, has left us a strange and striking memorial of the great weakness of some individuals. In his thesis, composed in 1697, he ventured to advance—

1st, That the invalid stands no more in need of blood, than a man asleep ;

2dly, That we have always too much blood for the necessary purposes of life;

3dly, That nothing increases so much, and to so dangerous an extent, as this fluid; and,

4thly, That almost all the blood may be taken away without depriving man of life; and that such a proceeding will even restore health, which had been previously lost.

We must regret, that a man endowed with such knowledge and ingenuity, could have brought himself to publish such pitiable physiological follies. We will venture to assert, for the advantage of all, that venesection is rarely attended with beneficial consequences. During a period of health it is always hurtful; and the habit many adopt of being yearly blooded, without any ostensible motive, can only shorten their lives, or render them more subject to the attacks of illness. Even the aged, whose vessels are overcharged with a little too

much blood, seldom require this relief. They will find a light diet afford all the benefit of venesection, without any of its disadvantages.

The "purgons" of every age have also boasted their medicines, as capable of expelling every humour, and of restoring the vital powers to full activity. How many, with the idea of anticipating maladies which would never attack them, have entailed disease on themselves, solely out of respect for their physician's prescriptions? Molière has justly scourged this absurdity, and since his day, we find fewer "inimical humours" coursing through our veins*.

To reason and experience we must look for the measures needful to preserve a sound and robust constitution. From them sprung the art of preserving health, the fostering science, to which man must al-

* This custom had its followers amongst the Egyptians also. According to Leclerc, this people imagined that emetics and purges, administered weekly, would prolong life much beyond the ordinary period.

ways owe his health and happiness. Every proceeding that does not emanate from them must be absurd and futile. If those are to be found who will think differently, if there still remain visionaries who would abuse public credulity, if Paracelsus, Mesmer, and Cagliostro, have yet their admirers, we shall mark them as ignorant, superstitious, or impostors. Though man be cold to truth, and ardently inclined to error, we will repeat, for the benefit of all, that these secrets, these panaceas, these greatly boasted elixirs, are not merely useless, but dangerous in the extreme, and actual poisons *.

If there be a panacea, or universal remedy, it is the contempt of evil, and courage in adversity; and the best of physicians is the desire to do good, which con-

* Hufeland says, daily experience convinces us, that the oldest persons are not to be found amongst the rich, great or luxurious. Peasants, labourers, sailors, those who have never given old age a thought, are the very classes that offer the most numerous examples of longevity.

stitutes that "aurea mediocritas," which Horace regarded as the first of blessings.

ON THE ATMOSPHERE, ITS PURITY, HUMIDITY, DRYNESS, AND TEMPERATURE; ON THE ACTION OF THE LIGHT AND WINDS; ON HABITATIONS.

The air conceals within its bosom the germ of life of every animated being. It is the great ground-work of existence; the origin and shield of health; sometimes a cause of death or the many disorders that precede it, according as it is pure or deteriorated in composition. Few are alive to the great good or evil influence of this astonishing agent of nature. Does this proceed from idleness or indifference? Which ever it may be, the little importance attached to this subject is much to be regretted. All should be aware, however, that in every stage of life, young or old, in sickness or health, they habitually

decompose the surrounding atmosphere; imparting to this fluid, in exchange for the principle of animation, deleterious subtances, which may cause death, if suffered to accumulate. The person advanced in years, in particular, possesses this melancholy attribute in a much greater degree, than in any other stage of life. Every one must have remarked the great difference between the pure breath of the young and the sometimes insupportable odour of that of the old man. To what are we to attribute the difference? Is it not to the greater animalization of the humours which circulate in the vessels of the latter, and their much greater tendency to putrefaction? This fact, which no one arrived at the decline of life can conceal from himself, should prompt those who set any value on health, never to neglect the precautions necessary for frequently renewing the air they breathe. Yet, how many neglect this important point, and seem to find pleasure in keep-

ing themselves shut up in close rooms! But what are the consequences? Serious illness, repeated indispositions, and premature death! This is peculiarly observable in damp situations, against which those of every age can never be too much on their guard.

Let us, on the other hand, look to the happy results of breathing a pure, varied, dry and slightly warm atmosphere. What a delightful freshness it imparts to all the organs; what strength, what health, immediately succeed its passage into the lungs! What elixirs, howsoever boasted, or receipts for long life, can compare with pure country air, especially among a circle of true friends, where cheerfulness and a mutual confidence reign?

A very damp air is dangerous to any one. The most robust, if constantly exposed to it, would soon sicken and sink under it. It is a sure source of rheumatism, deadly catarrhs, scurvy, and a host

of cutaneous disorders; consequent on a vitiated condition of the humours. The atmosphere, on the contrary, which contains but a small portion of water in solution, far from being to be dreaded by the aged, is peculiarly to be recommended for its efficacy.

Warmth is very necessary to old age. The natural heat, and that proceeding from the organs, is feeble, inactive, and not easily to be restored. Art must interpose to excite and preserve it; precautions doubly necessary, for there is no greater enemy to age than cold, which enervates, debilitates, and may even cause death.

Let us compare the old man accustomed to breathe a dry warm air, with the less fortunate, or more indifferent one, who inhabits a cold, damp, and foggy climate. The one is healthy, gay, and placid; the other uneasy, sickly, and feverish, seems to long for nothing but a period to his sufferings! We cannot too strongly recommend the old, when the air happens to be

cold and damp, to keep their rooms, and take exercise there. This rule should be especially observed by those of a weak and unhealthy habit. If any pressing circumstance should, however, oblige them to go abroad, every precaution possible must be taken against cold, and the middle of the day is to be preferred.

Two parts of the body, in the aged, are particularly liable to cold, namely, the legs and feet, to which the blood can only make a slow and painful progress. Sometimes, indeed, the vessels of these regions, becoming ossified and obstructed, refuse a passage to this vivifying fluid; and it is by no means uncommon to see the toes and feet attacked by dry gangrene.

The old man, who suffers from cold feet, besides many inconveniences, soon betrays dangerous symptoms. He becomes peevish, morose, fretful. Tormented by cold, headache, sore throat, or pain in the chest, his life becomes a burthen to him. Many

other diseases appear, his digestion becomes difficult, his breathing irregular; his bowels are attacked by repeated colics; and the most painful sleeplessness allows him no rest. Tissot mentions the case of an old man, in whom cold feet brought on a violent cutaneous spasm, and blindness, which continued until warmth was restored to the parts affected.

At night, it is very imprudent to retire to rest with cold feet; serious night-mare and apoplexy may be the result. Tissot, to remedy this inconvenience, made the person indisposed warm the soles of his feet, every night before the fire, until heat was felt to a painful degree. The constant use of drawers, of cloth or woollen stockings, aud flannel socks, is very efficacious in this affection. But the best mode of warming an old person, the surest and best, is a good fire-side. Nothing can equal it. It cherishes, enlivens, and animates the frame, and assists the functions of the mind and of nature.

It reanimates and increases the vital powers, which are always very feeble in the aged; it imparts gaiety to the imagination, vivacity and strength to the mind. But all means of imparting it are not equally good. The heat of a stove is of little efficacy. It expands to a greater extent, and more equally, certainly, but is generally too powerful. That which proceeds from a grate is far preferable. It can be better regulated, and the spot whence it proceeds, by attracting the view, seems also to give a force to reflection and thought, which they would not otherwise possess. Nevertheless, we cannot too clearly caution the old, always to keep themselves at a distance from a large fire; for it is by no means uncommon for some, who are slow in their movements, to be burnt by going too near. The skin of the legs, too, dries; and if ulcers form, their cure is impossible. It is equally bad to slumber by the fire, with the head bending forwards; for in this position it receives too great a body

of heat, the blood flows thither with more strength, and in greater quantity, and apoplexy is often the consequence.

The sun's warmth is not less useful to them than the fire. Like the latter, it increases the elasticity of the parts, assists the organs in their play, stimulates the skin gently, and favours the secretions and excretions of the humours. Why then do most of the aged seem to avoid it, and seek a darker atmosphere? We cannot say, unless from bad habit, unpleasing ideas, inclination to melancholy, and the miseries of hypochondriasis, which so often torment this period of life.

We cannot too often repeat the advantages of light to old age. Every thing, on the other hand, is to be dreaded from strong winds, and changes of weather. The equinoxes are always dangerous periods for them, as much so indeed as Winter itself. But ought the old, at such seasons, to remain shut up in their apartments? Will

not this confined life have its own disadvantages? To this I reply, according to the degree of strength or weakness of the patient. If he or she be delicate and susceptible of the too powerful impression of the winds, a stay within doors should be adopted. The individual, on the other hand, who is stronger in constitution, may lead a more active life. With him there is less to fear from sudden changes of atmosphere; indeed, it may sometimes be advisable for him to encounter them. If, timid to excess, he remains all the Winter in too close a room, if he knows nothing of this season but what he can see through his well secured windows, the fine Spring weather will bring *him* nothing but piercing, sharp, rheumatic pains.

The cold morning and night winds are equally bad for those of a delicate habit, who live in town in Winter, and go to the country in Spring; but in Summer, the old need not dread these scourges of their

health and happiness; and many, indeed, would be wretched, without the pleasures that they derive from a morning walk at this season. The air they then breathe seems to restore them to new life, and all the vigour of youth. This morning walk is particularly beneficial to the old person who walks along the furrows just made by the plough, and receives into his lungs the refreshing exhalations that spring from the earth *.

A residence in the country and in small towns, is much to be preferred by the aged to large cities, the very hot-beds of death, which they cannot too carefully avoid. Unhappily, a blind carelessness, particular avocations and unlucky chance, seldom permit a due observance of this counsel.

I might digress on the necessity, with

* Bacon knew an old man, who enjoyed excellent health, which he attributed to a custom he had adopted every morning on his rising, of having a cask of fresh earth brought to him, which he stirred about, nnder his nose, in order to inhale its freshness.

some, of a change of climate for their health; for instance, of some old persons quitting a cold damp for a more genial and dry atmosphere. Too few, however, have it in their power to make these tours, for it to be proper that I should here point out their advantages.

ON CLOTHES, BEDS, CLEANLINESS OF PERSON, BATHS, AND FRICTION.

Fashion and its caprices were never made for the old. If some of these offer them striking advantages, a much greater number have an effect on their health, more or less dangerous. It is to things useful, convenient, and reasonable, that they ought to yield the preference.

The essential point, in old age, is to be well clad; the soft, easy, flexible, woven cloths, warm clothing which does not check the motions, is particularly suited; these woven cloths preserve, better than any

other, the animal heat, which is ever escaping; they concentrate it about the body, whilst they excite its development in a greater or less degree. Woollen stuffs are perfectly adapted to this purpose. They have the great advantage of exciting transpiration, of maintaining its regularity, and preserving to the frame sufficient animal electricity, sometimes too ready to escape.

Applied immediately to the skin, these cloths have other effects not less important to most old persons. For instance, how many do we see, of upwards of forty years of age, pale, or too sensible to the changes of the atmosphere, and who, following an habitual sedentary life, only save themselves from innumerable disorders by wearing, in all seasons, shirts, waistcoats, and drawers of flannel! With this protection, they fear neither cold, damp, wind, nor electric currents; the regularity of their functions is rendered more certain. To the old, who constantly dwell in changeable climates,

we offer this advice; to those too, whose flesh is soft and spongy, whose bowels are loaded with mucus, who are tormented with flux, rheumatism, diarrhœa, pain in the breast, and cough; also to the asthmatic, the hypochondriac and convalescent. Nothing is better for the person habitually inclined to coldness of the feet than the use of woollen stockings, or when suffering from pains in the stomach, throat, vertigo, or determination of blood to the head.

A few days continuance in this course will cause a wonderful diminution of these symptoms. The advantages of woollen stuffs are not confined to this alone. They speedily absorb perspiration, and prevent its remaining on the surface of the skin; and the ambient atmosphere speedily acting on this animal fluid, by these means leaves the skin in a proper state of dryness.

Particular circumstances, however, are adverse to the use of woollen stuffs. For

instance, where the skin is attacked by very obstinate cutaneous affections, which injure its softness and glos , wool is not to be recommended, as, by the slight irritation it imparts, it might assist these eruptions, cause much pain and insupportable *pruritus*, or very annoying itching. In cases where these garments cannot be often changed or washed, wool should not be used, as in all its preparations it quickly soils, and is much more liable than linen to breed vermin, and cause disorders of the skin.

In past ages, fur was much worn by the old; none can doubt its efficacy, and its discontinuance by the present race is much to be regretted.

The habit of wearing woollen garments, once contracted, should not be given up *. Even a short temporary disuse of them,

* In increasing the preservatives against cold, the warm quality of the garments is rather to be considered than their quantity or weight. When too numerous, they must weary the aged, who are naturally feeble.

especially in a variable atmosphere, would greatly affect the play of transpiration, and might be attended with serious consequences.

When a very warm Summer forces an old person to change his Winter vestments for more seasonable ones, if he be feeble or a valetudinarian, he should use much caution. Galen advises him not to leave off his warm clothing until the season be advanced, and to resume it long before the return of cold weather. Sydenham, and he deserves attention, states, that those of an advanced age, who neglect this precaution, are almost always seized with very severe intermitting fevers.

The man of experience, therefore, will always be guided as to the quantity and nature of his apparel by the existing temperature. This rule is much to be preferred to any almanacks, which are not always remarkable for the exactness or regularity of their prognostics.

The head imperiously demands attention. How many believe their health would be in danger, if they did not keep this part particularly warm, both by day and night. This is a dangerous custom; for the head being sometimes necessarily exposed, becomes doubly susceptible of the slightest chill. Too great heat, also, concentrated in the very centre of the organ of thought, is in itself hurtful,; and to this I would particularly call the attention of those in this stage of life, who wear heavy wigs by day, and several woollen or cotton night-caps at night. Look to the consequences. They generate most powerful transpiration on the scalp, the suppression of which may be caused by the slightest indiscretion. The brain likewise becomes the seat of continual determination of blood, the usual result of which is apoplexy, paralysis, and death.

When a wig becomes necessary, it should be light, and thick enough to preserve a

very moderate heat. At night it is equally necessary to abandon the use of so many night-caps. A single linen one, covered with another of cotton, or sometimes of wool, is sufficient for any reasonable purpose, and as much as is requisite to health. A mass of powder and pomatum, covering the whole head, has its inconveniences, the least of which is the suspension of the transpiration of that part; from this originate also severe pains, shifting about the neck and skin of the skull, troubled sleep, and derangement of all the functions of life.

The shape of the clothes is by no means to be disregarded. In every case they should be loose enough, neither to cramp the muscular action, nor the play of any organ. This was the custom of the ancients. They did not, like the old of our day, tie up the neck with a tight cravat or stock; they allowed free play to this region, which has so many vessels and organs, the action of which is not to be

trifled with. Fothergill is of opinion, that a slight compression of the neck is a frequent cause of apoplexy. The shirt collar, for instance, is almost always too tight. It is equally necessary that the wrist bands, garters, and knees of breeches, should be loose. A neglect of these precautions must cause swellings in the veins and legs. The waist bands of breeches, as they were worn a few years back, pressed too much on the lower part of the belly. Many old men, however, still continue to use them, and the results are, innumerable hypochondriac affections, obstructions, hernia, painful piles, indigestion, the seeds of almost every malady. Breeches of a good width, and supported by braces, are the best. Fault, a famous German doctor, goes so far as to decry their use, *in toto,* and to recommend the *Scotch kilt,* as a substitute. Few of the aged, I believe, will feel inclined to follow this recommendation.

ON BEDS.

On a first view, we might suppose that the construction of this article is of very minor importance; this, however, is not the case. A hard or soft bed has a very different effect on him who only wishes to repose. A hard bed, of an elastic and springy formation, affords a sleep as soft as refreshing. The body does not imbibe too much heat, it preserves all its vigour; and the hour of rising is not attended with the heaviness which results from the use of too soft a bed. But beds, stuffed with down, or too much soft wool, cherish an excessive and almost feverish heat, affecting in particular the abdominal regions, the loins and organs of generation. Rousseau says that a soft bed, which buries one, actually melts the frame; the kidneys become irritated; giving rise to stone and other attacks, particularly in a delicate habit, which encourages every disorder.

The bed that affords the soundest sleep must be the best.

The old are often sluggards; many remain a-bed much longer than is necessary for rest. This is a very bad habit, and causes premature decay. A soft bed, too long in dulged in, is enervating; the rest they indulge in stupifies the feelings, and the activity of the organs; the movements become difficult or impossible; listlessness, or moroseness, take possession of the mind, and eventually come a host of infirmities, which bring the unfortunate being to a premature grave.

The position to be observed in bed is not undeserving of our attention. When the head and breast are so raised as to form a right angle with the pelvis and thighs; or when a sitting posture is used in bed, the position is bad; the organs of the belly being cramped in their action, different indispositions may result from difficulty of circulation; it is equally bad

for those subject to asthma or diseases of the heart. On the other hand, the head being too low is very bad, especially for apoplectic subjects. The better course to steer will be a medium between these two extremes.

The habit of bed-warming is, in most instances, bad for the aged. It weakens the body too much, which has already lost its vigour. The use of soft warm covering, or a pewter vessel filled with boiling water, placed at the foot of the bed, is greatly preferable.

ON CLEANLINESS.

Too many old persons are excessively negligent in the cares of cleanliness. Living no longer to please others, they indulge in shameful sloth, which is generally very injurious to them. They seem to forget that neatness is one of the surest methods of preserving health, inasmuch as it rids the body of the impurities which every mo-

ment generates in it, and which, if allowed to remain, may cause many bodily affections. Whence proceed, in the cases of many old invalids, their severe cutaneous attacks, tedious and sanious tetters and itching, and eruptions, but from neglect of cleanliness of person?

The severe Epictetus says, "what purity of heart is to the mind, such is cleanliness to the body. Nature herself inculcates it. As, after eating, some particles of food must adhere to the teeth, she provides you with water, and orders you to wash your mouth, to raise you above the level of the brutes. She gives you baths, oil, linen, combs, and vitriol, to cleanse your body from sweat and dirt. In neglecting their use, you lose all title to the name of man. Are you not careful that your horse should be rubbed down, your dog cleaned and scrubbed? Do not then treat your own frame worse than your horse or dog. Wash and cleanse yourself,

if you would not be shunned; for who does not fly the being that is careless of his person?"

At sixty, as well as twenty years of age, different kinds of washing should be often resorted to, to clear the surface of the skin from the excretions of the *epidermis*, which appear every moment. The perspiration of the old is likewise of a more irritating nature, and more likely to produce pimples, which, if not dangerous, are at least disagreeable. These washings have the effect of a bath, soften the skin, assist the movements, and regulate the functions. If the skin be dry, hard or rough, lukewarm lotions are preferable; if soft, pale, and flabby, water, rather cold, with a little salt or soap in it, is much better.

The face, neck, hands and feet, should be washed every day. If the legs are inclined to œdematous swellings, if the feet are habitually cold, a little wine, or a slight decoction of aromatic herbs, such as thyme

or lavender, may be added to the water made use of. This simple process, alone, often prevents swelled legs, so prevalent in old age.

ON BATHS.

To the aged these are not merely useful on the score of cleanliness, but have a great effect in prolonging their life, and the stability of their health. Of this the ancients were well aware; and indeed, according to Pliny, the bath was the only medicine known in Rome for the space of 600 years. The effect is great in anticipating and calming both bodily and mental affections. It not only purifies the skin, but fits the body in a greater degree to fulfil its different functions; it imparts ease, activity and pleasure throughout the system; excites sleep, and preserves in our organs that admirable harmony which contributes to health and peace.

The bath is not, however, adapted to

extreme old age; it would weaken it too much, and might even end in mortal syncope. Those who, though not so old, are feeble or cachectic, and whose digestion is slow and bad, should also avoid its use.

THE COLD BATH.

Nothing, perhaps, is less calculated for the old; their skin, already too dense, and too little inclined to perspiration, would be still further injured by the use of the cold bath; as their weakness would preclude the salutary reaction of the principal centres of life, the vital warmth would soon perish, and the consequences might be fatal. It was, nevertheless, at one period, supposed to restore to old age all the vigour of manhood; the Roman patricians, in particular, were of this opinion. Pliny mentions having seen old men of consular dignity shivering in the cold bath, and sustaining its inconveniences with stoicism, for the honour of their physicians and their

system. These are not its only inconveniences; it assists the development of the affections of the belly; it may cause sudden death to the apoplectic subject; or repel the cutaneous evacuations which are so efficacious to the old, and cause all the maladies consequent on such a retrocession. Of these points the physicians of the present day are well aware, and few will venture to recommend the use of the cold bath to their elderly class of patients. In some cases, however, it is of service. For instance, the hips may be plunged into cold water to expedite the cure of incontinence of urine, arising from weakness of the bladder, &c. &c.

VERY WARM BATHS.

The mania of some is a use of very warm baths. In this respect they imitate the ancient Romans, who, under the Emperors, found the greatest delight in the use of almost boiling baths. "*Balnea tunc*

similia fere incendio," says the great Roman naturalist. They are excessively injurious to every age, habit, and constitution; they excite the organs too much; produce excessive perspiration; lay the ground-work of a flow of blood to the head, and apoplexy; destroy the digestive functions, and frequently even injure the intellects, and induce stupidity.

Old men, too full of blood and of a feeble habit, should be particularly cautious in avoiding them.

TEPID BATHS.

Their good effect on the old is incontestible; and it was, without doubt, from her knowledge and use of them, that Medea formerly had the reputation of being able to confer youth. Celsus, one of the oracles of medicine, says, "Warm baths are particularly adapted to children and old persons, *calida lavatio et pueris et senibus apta est."* These baths, in fact,

ward off a premature old age; they restore softness and elasticity to all the parts, and assist the play of the joints. Taken once a-week, at least, they are peculiarly suited to old persons of a dry irritable constitution, or sedentary habit. They stop desiccation of the fibres, and retard the progress of an old age, which will reduce our vigour, and hurry us to the fatal goal, to which the steps of all are directed. We might mention many old men who are indebted to this custom for a prolongation of a life that their early excess would have greatly abridged. Phlegmatic old men, those who expectorate much, or are troubled with painful cramps, will find much benefit from the use of tepid baths. They are often hurtful to persons of a weak constitution, whose humours are tainted with scurvy or *cachexia,* or to those in whom excessive piles have caused a kind of general decomposition.

On quitting the bath, certain precau-

tions should be used, a neglect of which might cause very different results from those sought. Every attention should be used to preserve the skin from the effects of the atmosphere, to which it is at this moment very sensible and susceptible. To gain this end, the body should be dried as quickly as possible, and speedily and warmly clad. Dry rubbing over the whole body before the fire, will assist the good effects of the bath. Strict attention to these points is especially to be observed in cold damp weather.

The bath should never be used immediately after meals; it might have a dangerous effect on digestion, and death itself might be the result. Morning and evening are the periods most desirable for its use.

The question, whether the old should remain long in the bath, must be answered by reference to the strength of the individual, or the good or bad effects of the bath

on him. A quarter of an hour, or twenty minutes at farthest, generally suffice to answer the end proposed.

Water is the liquid principally used for baths. In some cases, however, reason and experience suggest the use of other substances; for instance, milk, or water in which aromatic plants have been boiled, or in which even wine has been infused. Œlius, and after him Savanarola, were the first to advise this kind of bath to very feeble old persons. They recommend their use an hour and a half before dinner, as assisting digestion. Water, in which some common salt or soap has been dissolved, may be used with equal success.

FRICTION.

Friction, in former times, was considered so efficacious to the old, that we find Plato daring to reproach Herodicus, who ordered it as an almost universal remedy, with improper conduct towards those who con-

sulted him, in prolonging by his art to the most advanced age, a life which would otherwise have been comparatively short.

Friction, deserves much attention from the old. It assists the play, of which the skin and muscles stand in need. In some cases, it is even a good substitute for that exercise, which cannot always be obtained. It is not only salutary to the old, who enjoy a good health; but it is also most requisite to the invalid. Celsus, and after him, Zecchius, used friction of the arms, thighs and legs, to restore the strength of a weakened stomach. Gentle friction is of great service to old persons, of a sedentary habit, debilitated, full of humours, flatulent, or subject to irregular attacks of gout, in Autumn, Winter, and Spring, when the atmosphere is loaded with fog and damp.

Friction of the belly is equally serviceable in hypochondriasis, or to those who are troubled with abdominal obstructions.

This friction should be renewed every morning on rising, reclining on the back, with the knees raised. The rubbing may be by hand alone, or with a brush or piece of flannel, which should be moved circularly over the belly in a gentle and regular manner, for at least ten minutes. This may be repeated in the evening, especially on the pit of the stomach, by persons of a bad digestion. By these means, circulation in the belly is assisted; the action of all its organs is vivified, the access of many disorders prevented, all the secretions restored and regulated, and the passage of the urine and fæces, which inthe old is so often disordered or deranged, is accelerated.

ON FOOD.

Man, of necessity, in the decline of life, loses, by degrees, his most noble and precious faculties. But, even at this period, he possesses a few, which afford him many

enjoyments, if he does not abuse them. One is appetite, a precious incentive to the old, though the stomach, its principal seat, has lost much of its former strength*. This weakness of the organ of digestion in old age, is a truth that cannot be concealed. If the aged, for a moment, forget it, and yield blindly to the temptations of the appetite, a sensation frequently deceitful, and whose activity is not, in all cases, equal to its cravings, they seldom fail to experience severe pain, if the danger does not even extend farther. The stomach, "father of the family," as has been learnedly observed, is the original source of the derangements of all the other members that follow. This important viscus holds such influence over the animal functions, and organization, that every part suffers when it is

* We daily meet with old people who no longer know the sensations of hunger and thirst. These are, almost always, persons who, in early life, have departed from the rules of temperance. Inanition and restlessness, in some, or a rumbling of the stomach in others, are the only symptoms that point out to them a want of food.

out of order, which is always the result of want of temperance.

This frightful and destructive vice, intemperance, leads to all these evils. Its victims are innumerable, and Hippocrates has justly stigmatized it, as more murderous than the sword.

But if the stomach is the first to experience its attacks, and to suffer from them, the mind, likewise, is not slow in following its example; the reason is shaken, the intellects lose their strength, the memory becomes impaired, the ideas obscured, and imbecility, the last stage of this physical and moral degradation, soon makes its appearance. If we turn to history, we read of the prodigious strength of Theagimus of Thasos, Astydamas of Miletus, and Milo of Crotona; but the same page will also inform us, that they were stupid and ignorant *.

* Few resemble Alceus of Mitylene, Sappho's lover, whose Pegasus would never take his flight, without the sti-

One of the first rules of wisdom is sobriety, that sublime virtue, which preserves to man his full faculties, and insures to him, strength, health, and long life. It should preside over and regulate his every action; whilst he stems the current of bad habits, a return to which is so common; this is the sole efficacious method of struggling, successfully, against the continued action of all the vices which would lead him to his ruin.

A thousand advantages proceed from sobriety. The body it animates is lighter, more agile and free in its movements; it causes a sweeter and more refreshing slumber, represses vicious inclinations; gives the greatest zest to the coarsest fare; imparts increased vigour to the senses, gives depth to the memory, expanse and clearness

mulus of every kind of intemperance. In a sort of delirium he composed those works, which have been the admiration of posterity. (Vide Anacharsis) "Bons vivans," may perhaps, cite the old age of Anacreon and Solomon, both of whom were given to the pleasures of the table, and yet attained a good old age. "Rara non sunt artis."

to the mind; lulls the passions, banishes anger and sorrow, and imparts good humour *.

How many wise men have, throughout a long life, preserved health and strength, by a strict observance of the rules of temperance alone. And is it not partly by an implicit obedience to its precepts, that many celebrated individuals reached an advanced age. Amongst these, we may particularly rank the Evangelist St. Paul, St. Anthony, St. Simon Stylites, St. Francis of Paulo, St. Martin, St. Augustine, St. Remy; and long before them, Daniel, Sabas, Socrates, Democritus, Hippocrates, Plato, Appolonius Tyanæus, Cato, Seneca, and others. We may add Phabrinus, mentioned by Athenius, who lived more than 100 years, drinking milk only, and

* Plutarch, mentions that the Egyptians were sometimes in the habit of placing a mummy on their tables, to remind the guest that he should avoid intemperance, which leads to death.

Zoroaster, who, according to Pliny, remained twenty years in a desert, living on a small quantity of cheese only *.

Experience and reason unite in recommending sobriety to man. It is the parent of health.

But if temperance possesses these advantages, on the other hand, too severe abstinence would be very inconvenient to the old. They may bear it better, certainly, than children could, but it is generally injurious to them. It must increase the weakness natural to that period of life; it causes a sort of stupor in the principal instruments of vitality, especially in the stomach, which, ceasing to be the stimumulant and regulator of all the parts, yields them a prey to unnumbered attacks,

* Josephus informs us, that the Essenians were very long lived; many lived upwards of 100 years, solely from their simple habits and sobriety. Aristotle and Plato speak of Herodicus the philosopher, who, although of a feeble and consumptive habit, lived upwards of 100 years, owing to his great sobriety.

which must disturb its government. How often, indeed, do we see old persons attacked by apoplexy, when the stomach, being too much weakened, no longer supports the brain by its sympathetic action!

This remark applies particularly to persons too scrupulously observant of religious fasts*.

The following rules should always be followed:—

1st. It is not what we eat, but what we digest, that nourishes and repairs the daily losses of the body.

2dly. In order to preserve to both mind and body full activity, to taste the pleasure and reap the advantages of food, it should be taken with prudence. Juvenal has immortalized this truth, in these words:—

"Voluptates commendat rarior usus."

* The stomach will not always hear reason. Are you hungry, it cries out for food; but it is not an insatiable creditor. It is satisfied at a trifling expense, provided you pay it all it ought to receive, but not all it is capable of containing.—(Seneca *On the true glory of Philosophy.*)

Let us appeal to experience, and it tells us, that almost all the Nestors of the human race, kept their digestion well regulated, in a greater or less degree, and never loaded the stomach beyond its powers! Such a preceptor deserves a more constant attention. How many have perished in the meridian of life, from yielding to the inordinacy of their appetites, or to luxurious aliments! "How many," says Cornaro, "have I seen fall in the flower of life, from a bad habit of eating too much! Of how many noble friends who might have adorned society, and done honour to their country, has it not deprived me!"

Many men of weak constitution have owed the preservation of their lives, and attainment of old age, to the good habit, acquired in early life, of weighing their food, so as never to exceed the proper allowance. Cornaro, Sanctorius, Bartholle, never took more than twelve or fifteen ounces of solid food a day, and conse-

quently lived very long, though their bad constitutions rendered this improbable. This habit once adopted should never be infringed; for it would be very dangerous in its effects. Cornaro affords a very striking instance. He at first lived on twelve ounces of solid, and fourteen of liquid nourishment; his health was good and regular; but on attempting to add two ounces of solid food to his daily pittance, he was convinced of the impropriety of the change by various indispositions. The person who eat heartily in the age of strength, should abstain as he advances in years. This may be accomplished by resolution; for we can do all that we wish, if we will make up our minds to it. This was the opinion of an ancient sage, "*Animus hominis, quidquid sibi imperat, obtinet.*"

This habit must be the work of time. Sometimes even, and from time to time, a little relaxation may be indulged, to give our attempts more strength and success.

Once master of himself, the prudent man will keep his vantage ground, well aware that nature may assert her original rights, and cause him to lose the reward of all his toils; like the cat in the fable, who on her metamorphose into a woman, sat very decently at table, till an unfortunate mouse happened to come in her way.

Temperance once acquired and adhered to, must establish the health *. The voluptuary, perhaps, will hesitate in subscribing to these doctrines. But let him learn that he loses all right to health; it was not made for any like him. That man only of a very strong frame, whose constitution has never been disordered, may adhere to some old customs, which perhaps he could not abandon with safety. In his case, a sort of slavery to the very best of rules might not be attended with the advantages of habits, vitiated in themselves, but which

* Epicurus declares that temperance causes vigorous health and agility in all the functions of life.

are in some measure domiciled in the individuals who have indulged in them so long. "How many people in health," says Heberden, "have injured themselves by too scrupulous an attention to a severe regimen!" The best rules do not suit all.

But my reader will, perhaps, ask what kind of food is most adapted to the old; how are they to judge as to what is proper or improper for them; and what should be the hours of their meals? Nothing has greater effect on life and its duration, than proper choice of food, in which we must be guided by the climate we live in, the air we breathe, the seasons, the habit, the age, the employment, and the degree of nourishment contained in the particular article of food. Experience will convince us that the plainest food is invariably the best. An examination of the different animals affords us striking proofs of the truth of this position. Some subsist on herbs, some on fish, flesh and roots. Man alone

tries all; nothing escapes him; the smallest fruit, the least product of the earth, the berry, the mushroom, all are subservient to his nourishment or his gluttony. Nothing, however, is worse for the old than this variety of foods, and those destructive high-seasoned dishes, which stimulate the vital strength at the expense of its duration *.

Man will find constant health and comfort by confining himself to one, or, at most, two different dishes at each meal. Many, but for the adoption of this course, would never have recovered the strength they had abused, nor lived to a green old age. How many have to attribute to this alone the cure of diseases which nothing else could conquer. All must have heard of sages living merely on bread, boiled fish, and fruits, and who yet attained the utmost limit of human existence. Paul, the

* Homini cibus ultissimus simplex. Acerbatio soporum pestifera et condimento perniciosior.

hermit, St. Anthony, Arsenius, St. Epiphanus, reached upwards of a century, subsisting merely on bread, dates, roots, a few fruits, and water. This fare is well adapted for weak, sickly, infirm, or very irritable old persons, or to those subject to spasms in the stomach, or of a plethoric habit.

This simplicity and strict uniformity of food is not suited to every stomach. With some it would cause great debility, and disgust and satiety would take place of appetite. With them, necessarily, the food might be slightly varied. The meals of most old persons should consist of two or three dishes; one only, if daily varied, might be preferable. Tissot knew an old valetudinarian, who having, at the age of forty, laid down as a rule never to eat of more than one dish, by a perseverance in this plan, lived to the age of ninety, in full enjoyment of his health and faculties *.

* Maladies des gens de lettres.

The preparation of our food demands an equally scrupulous attention. The simplest will be the best. On the craving of the stomach will depend the best regulation as to the quantity and measure of food. The person who after meals complains of giddiness, heaviness, lassitude, uneasiness, distention of the belly, or great inclination to sleep, has exceeded the rules of prudence*. If, on the other hand, he has been moderate, he finds himself light and easy, and unconstrained in his movements.

In cases where conviviality induces us to exceed the usual quantity at dinner, no supper should be eaten, the next day's dinner should be lighter, or even a fast might not be injudicious, if the unpleasant effects of indigestion still exist. These are the rules to be observed in order to acquire a good digestion. It may be well to recommend eating slow, the better to amalgamate

* According to Pythagoras, as much as does not incommode you, is the proper quantity for the wants of the body.

the saliva and food, and (what is, perhaps, not sufficiently attended to) to chew the food well, or divide it with instruments for the purpose, should the teeth fail. As to the number of meals to be taken in the day, and at which of them the greatest quantity of nourishment should be taken; in referring to the ancients to answer these questions, I find myself under some difficulty, as almost all of them have run into equally blameable extremes. Whilst many nations took but one meal a day, the Romans, under the Emperors, indulged in five. I must find fault with both, as applicable to the old. One single meal per day must overload, fatigue, and exhaust the stomach, and cannot fail to excite indisposition, which is always serious to old age. Too many are equally bad, as they allow the stomach no rest.

We cannot do better than take three light meals a day; two would not suffice for many aged persons; inasmuch as the

interval would be too great, and must be attended with craving and pain.

I knew a respectable clergyman, who made a light breakfast, and never dined until five o'clock. About two in the afternoon, he invariably felt weakness in the legs, and painful giddiness. On being consulted by him, I ordered him a third meal, and he found himself much better for it; but circumstances having compelled him to relapse into his former course, he was very soon seized with apoplexy.

Dinner, which should be eaten about two o'clock, should be the heartiest meal. Supper, on the contrary, should be very light; and true physicians cannot, without surprise, see Hippocrates, Celsus and Galen, recommend the very contrary.

Can these oracles of the art never have had an opportunity of remarking the numerous dangers attendant on their advice in this respect? All are aware, that all the examples of longevity took very light sup-

pers*. This will be the best means of preserving health of body and mind. We might, with Bacon, assure our readers, that whilst the nations of Europe slight these precautions, dictated by experience, they will be constantly liable to indigestion, and their organization always deranged. It is not with a full stomach that the sage precepts of reason can be best cultivated. At that period the vices come more fully into play, and man appears only in that more odious light, too common in our history.

ON FOODS IN PARTICULAR.

I have already mentioned that the choice of foods, their nature, and different preparations, were deeply important to the aged. Although the man who has hardly reached

* We are indebted for this wise adage to the Salernia school, "Si vis te reddere sanium, parcere mero, cœnato parum."—"If you would preserve yourself from the attacks of sickness, drink little wine, and sup lightly." Many old people would find their health much benefited by not taking any supper.

his fiftieth year, may be less scrupulous on these points, it should not be so with the sexaginarian. In his case, nourishment, rather liquid than solid, slightly stimulant, and with but little body, will be the best. Too luxurious or highly seasoned food, will always injure him. The art of cookery would then be, as far as regards him, only a dangerous allurement, and I cannot too often repeat to him, with Amyot, that to a man of his age, in particular, "the arts of cooks and confectioners, with all their train of dishes and sweets, hurry both voluptuousness and life to a speedier end, and far exceed the purposes of utility."

The first, the best, and most used food is bread. When well baked and light, the old digest it with ease; they should, however, be cautious in its use; when too new it swells easily when impregnated with the salivary and gastric juices, and its volume consequently increasing much, causes a painful distention of the stomach, and di-

minution of its vital power. Being also particularly nutritious, it should be taken with especial discretion by persons of a very sanguine habit, or much inclined to corpulency.

I recommend the use of soup to the old. Those indeed of a very advanced age cannot do better than to confine themselves to this sustenance alone; panadas, soups, eggs, or chocolate, are the most wholesome aliments for them and every feeble person. If soups are ever injurious, it is when too hot or too thick. The first diminishes the tonic force of the stomach; the second does not sufficiently intermix itself with the juices, and must cause indigestion. The difficulty of mastication which many old people experience, renders this mode of nourishment particularly proper for them*.

I should hesitate in speaking in terms of equal commendation of gravies, jelly-

* Hufelandis of opinion, that the older the man is the more he should confine himself to the use of soup, which, he says, in very advanced age may even obviate the use of medicine.

broths, or stews, which are always slow of digestion, containing, as they do, independent of nourishing juices, so thick a mucilage, as to render them difficult of dissolution. Their composition may be improved, and rendered more proper, by the addition of a considerable quantity of water, to diminish their consistency; and under the latter process only, can they be classed among the kinds of nourishment adapted to the old. Common broth is, however, still preferable, and it may be mentioned as the best possible sustenance for a weak stomach.

Mastication being always difficult with persons of advanced age, meat is not always easy of digestion with them; that of young animals, however, cut small, is both a salutary and agreeable food. I should never forbid their eating beef, well done, veal, kid, mutton, partridge, fowl or pigeon, either roasted, stewed, or "*en daube*."

Beef, over cooked, very young animals, whose flesh is glutinous, fat fowls, every kind of ham, Italian or Bologna sausages, dried geese, salt herrings, high-flavoured game, such as pheasant, wild goose or duck, the more delicate kinds of fish, stewed in the choicest wines, and highly seasoned; truffles, pastry, fries, the feet of animals, cream, and rich cheeses, may be considered poisons to most old persons.

Fresh unadulterated milk acts as a direct but not a stupifying sedative on the system; it moderates the circulation of the humours, quiets the organs of the mind and body, and is well suited to those of an active habit; these qualities, alone, prove that it is by no means proper for the old. Indeed it often gives them violent pains in the stomach, vomitings, and bowel complaints, especially when their stomachs are weak and full of humours; and Hippocrates has very justly remarked, that it is highly unsuitable for individuals who suffer

from headache, for hypochondriacs, or corpulent persons.

Milk soups, nevertheless, under some circumstances, are a very wholesome sustenance, the use of which may be advised. Individual experience must throw a light on their advantageous or contrary effects. Cheese is always, more or less, acid, and should never be taken alone, and even with any other substance, should be taken with moderation. In that case it will aid digestion. Few of my readers are ignorant of the Latin verse:—

"Caseus ille bonus quem dat avara manus."

Shell-fish, trout, pike, carp, mackarel, turbot and sole, are very proper food for the old. They should not, however, be too constantly used, as daily experience convinces us they would, in that case, increase a tendency to cutaneous affections, or give new energy to them, where the seeds exist. This food is fattening, and at the same time excites the organs of reproduc-

tion sufficiently powerfully. These fish are better boiled than fried, and the spawn of most of them is indigestible.

Vegetables, likewise, afford excellent food for the old. Those whose stomachs are slimy can hardly eat enough of the cruciferous plants, horse-raddish, turnips, radishes, or mustard.

Farinaceous foods cannot be so highly commended; they are flatulent, and may, therefore, be dangerous to those who suffer from hernia and weak stomachs.

Most old people are very fond of fruit; when ripe and taken in moderation, it is very useful. But how many have fallen victims to indigestion for want of discretion on this head. I myself remember five or six who died from eating too freely of fruit in the evening.

CHOCOLATE.

This is a very substantial nourishment, and there are few, perhaps, better suited to those who are reduced by age or sickness. Many find very beneficial effects from it, when made with water and very thin. With many it has a contrary effect, if made with milk and of too great consistency. It is, in some instances, too nutricious, causing constipation, and even other bad results with those of a sanguine habit, or inclined to affections of the liver. Lieutaud goes so far as to assert, that a constant use of it produces jaundice. The chocolate, known by the name of "chocolat de santé," is not so easy of digestion as that to which a little vanilla has been added; and this last would rather seem, more justly, to merit the title bestowed on the former, and more particularly in cases of weakness. Old persons tormented by certain obstinate loosenesses, will experience its good effects.

TEA.

This beverage, so much in vogue with the English and Dutch, is also in very general use in France. Bontékoe greatly forwarded its fame, by declaring that its qualities were wonderful, and that two hundred cups of it might be taken per day without any bad effect. It is needless to refute such an absurdity. Taken from time to time, tea may not be without its uses. Individuals exposed to cold, or who are habitually suffering from the dampness of the air, will be relieved by it. It excites transpiration, secretion of urine, and gives strength to the body, and increased power and penetration to the thoughts and mind. But in mentioning its good qualities, I must not conceal its bad effects; on which Boerhaave and Zimmerman have especially enlarged. In point of fact, tea taken every day, or made too strong, debilitates the stomach and nervous system: gives

rise to flatulence, trembling, agitation, anxiety, vertigos, sleeplessness, faintings, nervous suffocations, palpitations, the deepest melancholy, or all the results of hypochondriasis. Tissot says, "the tea-pots full of hot water that I see on every table, remind me of the box of Pandora, whence all the evils took their flight; with this difference, that here even Hope herself is not left behind!"

COFFEE.

Coffee made with water, called by some writers "an intellectual beverage," is in such general use, that many could not bear the idea of dispensing with it. Few drinks can compete with it; and so firmly is its name established, that any attempt to decry it would be futile. Both rich and poor, wise and weak, sacrifice to its shrine.

It affords a sedative to the mind, at the same time that it enlivens it. It excites and facilitates all the vital functions, bright-

ens the memory, kindles the imagination, and gives flow to the thoughts. Nothing is better in alleviating the pain consequent on indigestion; it strengthens the tone of the stomach, dispels wind, banishes torpor, heaviness and headache, and aids the operation of the pores. Stout persons, subject to slimy humours or moist asthma, or of a hippish habit, will derive assistance from it. Those who stay much at home, and are too much given to that worst of courses, a sedentary life, will derive from this beverage both pleasure and health.

Its good qualities, however, must be necessarily limited; and its effects, when taken in great excess, without reference to age, person, or constitution, are likely to be productive of consequences the most detrimental to an invalid. It is injurious to very plethoric people, or old men whose fibres are dry and irritable, frequently producing pimply eruption on the face, sleep-

lessness, marasmus, and sometimes head-aches, which will not cease until its use is discontinued.

Some medical men are of opinion, that to its abuse are to be attributed the frequent attacks of apoplexy, so much more common than in former years. In other cases, the disuse of coffee will banish spasmodic affections and painful sleeplessness.

ON SAUCES, &c.

Health and appetite may justly be considered the best seasoning to our food. In modern society, gluttony required additional ones to assist impunity in excess, and the treasures of the two worlds are hardly sufficient to gratify its caprice. They may, however, be used in moderation, in which case they are as useful as pleasant. They procure enjoyments which give us a warmer sense of life, and facilitate and stimulate the play of the organs.

The first of all seasoning is salt, which

is a powerful digestive, and assists the expulsion of the ropy humours. It is not so salutary to persons inclined to cutaneous disorders. The school of Salernum declares, that he who uses too much salt with his food is more disposed to itch, scabs, and all the affections of the skin.

Pepper, ginger, nutmeg, and cinnamon, are good incentives to appetite, but shorten life if used indiscreetly. If they are well adapted in moderate quantity to the old person of too full or plethoric a habit, or whose stomach is filled with ropy humours, or sluggish in its action, they are most pernicious to those who are meagre, dry, and irritable; nor are they less so when sanguine, inclined to apoplexy, affection of the liver, stoppages of the stomach, disorders of the kidneys, bladder, or piles. The remark, however, has been made, that preparations of vanilla have frequently been found efficacious with old persons given to melancholy and indigestion.

Vinegar, generally speaking, is injurious to old people.

Sugar, on the other hand, is particularly wholesome, and excellent in aiding the decomposition of the food in weak stomachs. Honey is equally so: Pythagoras mentioned it to his pupils as the best nourishment for the old, and many of his disciples lived very long on this single article *. According to Horace, Pliny, and Martial, the Romans added honey to their wine, their ragouts and sauces, to heighten their flavour and solubility. Physicians, however, remark, that sweet substances have few charms for the bilious, from their bad effects.

ON DRINKS.

Most old persons drink little. This is probably bad, inasmuch as the food is deprived of the necessary solvents, which cannot be replaced; it also tends to increase dryness and fibre; and the elements of the

* Vide Anacharsis, Vol. ii.

urine not being sufficiently diluted with water, irritate the urinary ducts too much, and may contribute to many of the maladies of which they are, at this time of life, the seat.

A contrary excess would be equally hurtful. The stomach, kept too much distended, would quickly lose its contractile powers, and it would not fail to generate difficulty of digestion.

Of all beverages the most in use is water; great gift of nature, without which no animated being could exist. But its greatest admirers are not to be found amongst the old. Alone, it seems to them not sufficient, and to enable them to enjoy it, it must be blended with some more stimulating liquid.

Most persons at this time of life, in fact, require some beverage more tonic and strengthening; but for those who are strong, vigorous, very full of blood, with disposition to apoplexy or stone; water alone, or

at least slightly mixed with wine, is best. We know too, that in most cases of gout, when the attack is regular, very long and painful, water is the properest beverage; it is less suited, and even may be dangerous to the aged, whose blood is full of humours, weak, exhausted by continued diarrhœa, or a diseased stomach.

WINE.

If there be a period when wine possesses none but good qualities, it is that of old age; and so firmly convinced was Plato of this, that he called it the milk of the old. It had by no means escaped his observation, that this precious liquid warmed and rekindled their courage, as well as their strength *. By the happy impressions it causes, by a pleasing excitement of the brain it fosters and renews their gaiety, keeps the mind in constant play, gives birth

* Speaking of wine, Pliny says, " Plus utile seni quam juveni."

to and developes kind feeling, confidence, and cordiality. "I have known," asserts Cabanis, "many old men, who during their whole lives had drank freely, and who, at the most advanced age, still possessed all their mental and almost all their bodily strength *." He adds, "I may, perhaps, be warranted in asserting, that in those countries where wine forms a common article of daily fare, we find, in proportion, most vigorous and healthy octogenarians."

It is, however, a drink, a medicine indeed, which should be administered with caution, under the penalty of the heaviest indispositions. Taken in excess, it excites diarrhœa, withers the fibres, produces leanness, dropsy, and stupefaction of the intellectual faculties. Sir William Temple observed of wine, with great justice, "the first glass for myself, the second for my friends, the third for good fellowship, and the fourth for my enemies."

* Traité du Physique et du Moral de l'homme, Vol. ii.

Irritable old men are inconvenienced by the use of wine, I would therefore recommend them beer, especially those who suffer from gravel; but not to the phlegmatic, flatulent, slow of digestion, or whose stomach is overcharged with humours; wine is their best friend, especially in Winter and damp weather. Wines of the best quality are preferable, as they afford not only a stimulus, speedy in its action on the stomach, but certain mild tonics, impregnated with extractive substances, which regulate and prolong their operation.

If the wines of Corcyra, Naxos, Thasos, Chios, and Falernum, so renowned amongst the ancients, are now so rare as to prevent our recommending their use to the aged, we may point out to them, as not less efficacious, Malaga, dry Madeira, Alicant, or Muscatel, likewise Vin de Grave, Pontac, and old Burgundy.

Red wines, generally speaking, are the best. The white, however, are preferable for old persons who are very fat, or trou-

bled with gravel; but with the exception of Champagne, they are often injurious to the gouty subject. An adherence to the use of one kind of wine is absolutely necessary to insure stability of health. The rich of every country and age may attribute many of their indispositions solely to the monstrous abuse they have allowed themselves at table of different wines possessing the most opposite qualities.

SPIRITUOUS LIQUORS.

In every country, in the present age, spirituous liquors are indulged in to a blameable excess. This reproach applies to every class of society, and perhaps, indeed, more to the higher than the lower orders. The tables of the rich, in modern days, are almost always laid out, as if debauchery alone was to preside there. Glasses of every shape, and rich decanters crowd the board; and we should, perhaps, be accused of want of taste, if we refused

to overload the stomach with the most inflaming liqueurs.

The medical world have repeatedly deprecated this murderous system, but in vain. Vice and our passions, more powerful than their counsels, have perpetuated this highly injurious habit. Many old people may attribute the indispositions which torment them to this pernicious use of spirituous liquors. If they are useful in very cold, and sometimes in dry warm countries, by sustaining the strength, and stimulating the vital powers of the stomach, they are very bad in such climates as ours, inasmuch as they derange the sensitive system, and affect the cerebral functions. They give rise also to cutaneous and stomachic disorders, contracting, drying, and hardening all the living solids, and inducing premature old age. Persons of a sanguine and sedentary habit, who have been addicted to their use and abuse, are particularly liable to pains in the back and loins,

caused almost always by the existence of stone.

Old persons, annoyed by bad digestion or flatulence, foolishly imagine that spirituous liquors alone can rid them of these inconveniences. Let them only, themselves, examine into the consequences; a very short time will have elapsed before they will discover that the result is not what they anticipated.

If these liquors do appear at first to strengthen those who fly to them for relief, it is but to bring them at last to a state of weakness almost incurable. The wind and indigestion, which they wished to conquer by these applications, soon reappear or increase with their use, and the hope of a more cheering prospect is for ever lost. We will cite two examples. Zimmerman mentions a hypochondriac person, who every evening took a small glass of French brandy. His malady increased daily, and his flatulence was suc-

ceeded by vertigos; he then increased his dose of brandy, until at last he was seized with apoplexy and died. Pecquet, the celebrated anatomist, who disliked exercise, and did not think it a good digestive, preferred, for the purpose of assisting his digestion, one or two small glasses of brandy after his meals. For some time this plan answered; but at last his stomach and intestines, exhausted by so powerful a stimulus, completely refused aliment, and he soon fell a victim to his folly. All *liqueurs*, as well as brandy, deserve no better character. Their use should be forbidden at the board where we wish temperance and health to preside. If their flavour be exquisite, they owe it to essential oils or other principles, which have always a most pernicious influence over the economy of the human frame. Thus then, with the exception of some cases of sudden debility, to dispel which a brisk stimulant is necessary, or some slow disorders, whose treat-

ment requires that nature should be powerfully urged; in a word, excepting some habitual dispositions of a sluggish temperament, where life languishes, when no longer kept up by artificial stimulants; I say, with these exceptions, the use of spirituous liquors is useless, dangerous, and even fatal.

ON THE NATURAL EVACUATIONS.

The freedom as well as regularity of all the natural evacuations are always closely connected with health. Their suppression, or irregularity, inform the invalid of a change for the worse, according as either may be the cause of it. It is highly incumbent, therefore, to watch closely over their course, especially at a time of life when the weakened organs no longer act but with tardiness, and where their feeble play is so easily deranged.

CUTANEOUS TRANSPIRATION AND PERSPIRATION.

These very important evacuations are connected with the most essential phenomena of life; but the dry, rough, and almost impenetrable skin of most old persons is little fitted for the rejection of either. Still it is by no means uncommon to find old people have copious perspirations, general or local, to the existence of which they are indebted for all the blessings of health. We also see the profuse perspirations which attach themselves to some of the other sex about the periods of their monthly crises, which are so highly beneficial to them, that the inconsiderate suppression of them occasions a host of disorders, such as injurious affections of the breast, apoplexy, &c. These perspirations are regular or irregular. When regular, they appear every morning, during a greater or less number of years. The male sex

experience, and with equally favourable results, similar perspirations. I know a gentleman, upwards of 72 years of age, who, for more than fifteen years, has been nightly subject to a universal and most profuse perspiration. On the slightest action of a cold air, he suffers from great muscular weakness, and a more or less strongly marked difficulty of breathing, which does not cease until the transpiration has resumed its vigour, aided by drinks, rest, and warm covering, which assist the action of the skin. It is therefore clear, that the health of many advanced in life, is most closely linked to such an evacuation, and that their lives are rendered more safe in proportion as its course is more regular. In some cases, nevertheless, a too copious or frequent excretion causes exhaustion, the danger of which is speedily perceptible. This should be reduced by gentle exercise and friction, and mild tonics, such as Bourdeaux wine.

In other constitutions, transpiration is very imperfect in its action. The skin is so dry as to afford but little assistance to its passage. This evacuation, consequently confined in the smaller vessels of the skin, irritates them, and causes those itching pustules which we frequently see very numerous on the bodies of old persons. The use of the bath, and immediate friction on leaving it, are the most certain methods of restoring this highly essential function.

The exciting heating substances, which the vulgar apply to gain the same end, so far from remedying, increase the evil. Zimmerman mentions that quacks, empirics, and old women, believe perspiration to be the *ne plus ultra* of medicine. In their idea, it is the sole means of expelling all the vitiated humours; but, on the other hand, how carefully do they conceal the list of those who have fallen victims to an excess in this alone!

NASAL MUCUS.

Most old persons use the pocket handkerchief frequently. The mucous matter they expel seems partly to supply their defective transpiration; it is consequently incumbent on them to keep up this evacuation to a proper degree. Snuff is the substance commonly made use of to favour or augment this secretion; and taken in moderation, this powder, whose use is so often abused, is useful to lymphatic and phlegmatic temperaments, in cases of pains in the head, eyes and ears. If we are to believe its adherents, indeed, it sharpens the sight, clears the brain, and gives increased activity to the mind. When the use of snuff becomes habitual, it also becomes an imperious craving, which we can no longer resist. It is even so far useful, that it might be dangerous, suddenly, to suppress the favourable impression it causes

on the nervous *papillæ* of the olfactory membrane.

All the medical world, however, do not subscribe to its utility. Murray says, that its advantages exist more in opinion than in reality; and Bacon compares it to henbane or opium, in its effects on the brain, the faculties of which it often troubles. But what says observation? That if it be useful to some, it is equally dangerous to others; for instance, that it is by no means suited to persons who have ulcerations or polypus in the cavities of the nose, or who are subject to nasal bleedings. That it is equally unfit for those in whom the complexion is florid, or the eye blood-shot; phenomena which indicate determination of blood to the brain, and strong tendency to apoplexy. Snuff, in these circumstances, would augment the evil.

But above all, the great excess in which many indulge in its use is blameable. In that case, far from preventing apoplexy,

as is commonly maintained, it stupifies, causes headache, vertigo, pain, and finally, apoplexy itself, which it has been held to counteract.

OF SALIVA.

At this age, a greater quantity of saliva and glutinous matter is passed from the chest, than at any other. In the morning, in particular, the old reject a great deal of this mucous saliva. Its expulsion is highly useful, by ridding the throat of matter which might choak its passage. It would also be as unpleasant as hurtful to them to swallow this spittle instead of rejecting it, inasmuch as it would plaster the interior surface of the stomach with a tenacious and viscous coat, which would essentially injure its digestive action. It is less necessary, and even injurious, to spit out the pure saliva, that precious fluid, which is one of the elements of good digestion. Those who contract this bad habit become

weakened and withered, and even fall into languor and marasmus, which is the case with hippish persons in particular.

Many old persons find great enjoyment in smoking tobacco; there are, nevertheless, very few to whom this habit is healthful. Indeed, according to Tissot, not one habitual smoker ever lived to a great age. Nor is it more true that the custom is a preventive of apoplexy. The physicians of experience and observation, on the contrary, will say, that smoking tobacco rather gives a tendency to it than otherwise. If it be sometimes of use, it is only so for the inhabitants of damp situations, for phlegmatic, fat, or catarrhal subjects, or for asthmatic persons, who expectorate badly.

PASSING OF URINE.

It is of the greatest moment to the old, never to retain their urine too long, and to avoid every thing which may retard or suppress its course. At their age, the

bladder, sluggish and but slightly sensible of the urinary stimulus, gives but little indication of its presence. They ought, therefore, twice or thrice a day to attempt the expulsion of this fluid, whether they feel any want to do so or not.

Few persons advanced in life are sufficiently attentive on this head; the urine remains too long in the bladder; and such is the consequent irritation, as frequently to cause catarrh, always dangerous, or palsy, no less disagreeable, in this region. It may also give rise to stone. Galen mentions the cases of many individuals, who, after too long retention of urine, either from want of thought, laziness, or decency in church, in the senate, in court, or at table, lost all power of passing it at will*. The famous Tycho-Brahé, being in the carriage of one of the Austrian Emperors, and not daring, from etiquette, to alight, to answer the calls of nature in this particu-

* De sympt. causis, lib. iii. cap. 8.

lar, died from retention of urine. Sometimes old people make very little water, particularly in Summer. They should, under such circumstances, aid nature by acid and diluent drinks, by a decoction of pellitory; they should eat such herbs and fruits as excite the urinary secretion; for instance, parsley, asparagus, celery, cherries, strawberries, baked apples, &c. taking little exercise, not sleeping too long, and carefully avoiding soft and warm beds.

It is no less important to be acquainted with the best position of body, in which to void the urine. Many, for instance, do so in the morning lying on the back. This is bad; as in such a position all the mucus of the bladder cannot pass fairly out with the water, it remains therefore and becomes the nucleus of a calculus, the uric acid readily generating crystals in its mass*.

To lie on the side during this operation

* Biblioth. Britan. Mem. on the Composition of the Animal Fluids, by Berzelius, anno 1813.

is no better. It is much more proper to get up and pass the urine in a standing position, or kneeling in bed, taking care to void the very last drop.

FÆCES.

All old persons are more or less costive. The majority of them, indeed, are never so well as when affected slightly by it, although it is usual to hear them complain of the dryness and small quantity of their excrement, as of an actual malady. This constipation, however, to be advantageous, should not be of more than two or three days duration. When of longer standing it must be resisted. Heberden, nevertheless, tells us of a man who never used the water-closet oftener than once a month, and still preserved perfect health *.

Aged personswho are affected with con-

* The same author mentions another old person who retired for the same purpose a dozen times a day, for the space of thirty years, and experienced no inconvenience from it.

stant eruptions, those who lie too long a-bed, and old persons of a sedentary habit, are more inclined to constipation than others; as very hard and abundant fæces collect in the intestines, which frequently cannot be expelled without very powerful applications.

Trioen cites one of these cases of constipation which ended fatally, after a duration of three months, in a woman of 84 years of age. When suffered to exist too long, they aid brain attacks and apoplexy; and when not so fatal in their results, cause very obstinate headaches, deranging all the operations and faculties of the mind; an unanswerable proof of the justice of Pliny's assertion, that much of our moral liberty depends on a well regulated stomach. "*Magna pars libertatis est bene moratus venter.*"

Many means present themselves of preventing or conquering these affections. We may regulate this last act of digestion,

by retiring every morning to the privy at a fixed hour, and exerting ourselves to provoke this evacuation, whether our want to do so be great or otherwise; and daily experience proves, that by a perseverance in this course, nature gradually acquires a degree of regularity in this operation. If the costiveness happens to be but slight, and little inconvenient, we should rise early, walk abroad, or in the house, if the weather be unfavourable; baked and acid fruits, laxative meats, such as veal, young animals, and vegetables having the same effect, for instance, spinach, sorrel, &c., and a glass or two of cold water, are highly to be recommended. Glysters of bran, pellitory, or sometimes of camomile or kitchen salt, if the bowels are weak and windy, may be used with success. A sedentary life, and too much sleep and anxiety of mind, are to be avoided.

But constipation is sometimes proof against all these plans; and on such occa-

sions more powerful preventives must be resorted to, to obviate its dangerous consequences, which are, swelling of the belly, painful colic, inflammation and mortification of the bowels, obstinate sleeplessness, vertigo, and excruciating headache, &c. In such cases, cold water has been poured on the belly, and frequently afforded almost instant relief. It might not, moreover, be useless to adopt the plan of Savanaroli, who advised a Duke of Ferrara, suffering from an obstinate costiveness, to walk barefoot on a marble pavement just sprinkled with cold water; the Duke had not proceeded fifty paces before the remedy had its desired effect. Sometimes, however, these prescriptions might be inapplicable, and even dangerous, especially where the breast was also affected. Ténon points out a much more certain and prudent method; namely, that of applying the right fist strongly towards the right groin; pressing firmly against the internal face of the

hip-bones, as far as the ribs of the same side, thus traversing the whole extent of the base of the chest; then descending again, and pressing towards the left hip and groin, frequently repeating this manœuvre; sometimes also using the hand on the middle of the belly, which may be pressed in different directions before commencing the above mentioned process. If the belly is not sore, a sort of *kneading* of this part may be adopted with success.

When a desire to evacuate appears, we should be cautious not to strain too much, which might induce piles or hernia, or increase the development of those diseases, so common in the decline of life. It will even be prudent, in the execution of this function, to apply the clenched fists to the groins, if at all inclined to hernia, which inclination may be discovered by the efforts which the intestines make to protrude themselves through the apertures in the belly, near these parts. If hernia already

exist, we ought, if it cannot be kept up by a truss, to grasp it with the hands, and maintain this position strictly, to prevent its increase, and the strangulation which might be the result*.

If, on the other hand, an old person suffer from too great looseness, immediate attention should be given to it; if he would avoid weakness, emaciation and consumption. One of the surest modes for its prevention is abstinence from thin or indigestible food, restraint of the appetite, and the use of tonics; a little powder of rhubarb has been often used with excellent effect.

Occasionally, looseness proceeds from an accumulation of humours internally, caused by the contraction of the skin, which has lost the activity of youth. It frequently and speedily follows sudden exposure to severe cold.

* Such is the utility of a truss, for those suffering from hernia, that Dionis was accustomed to say, "Better go without a shirt, than without a truss."

In these different cases, the looseness may be easily remedied by favouring the restoration of strength; by moderate exercise and tepid baths, if the patient be sufficiently strong; and by general friction, for the purpose of promoting transpiration. The body should be well covered with flannel, and the feet kept constantly warm; when very feeble, some wine and a moderate opiate should be taken every night going to bed.

Wind in the digestive organs is also a frequent annoyance to old age. Asthmatic, hypochondriac, gouty, and rheumatic persons are peculiarly liable to it. The stomach and intestines, on such occasions, swell considerably; respiration becomes difficult; the head painful; the ideas become confused, and the mind heavy. The passage of this wind, upwards or downwards, always affords relief; but its forced retention, on the other hand, occasions fatal accidents; and it is not to be forgot-

ten, that the Emperor Claudius, who, probably, had experienced some one of these unpleasant results, issued a decree, permitting windy persons to dispense with good breeding when compelled by imperious necessity.

A foolish habit has been adopted of using heating substances, and particularly spirits, to counteract this annoyance. They very seldom procure real relief; but, on the contrary, increase irritation, spasms, weakness of the bowels, and all their bad consequences. It is much more advisable to use gentle friction of the belly by the hand, which should be rubbed for a length of time over its surface.

TIME OF RISING AND SLEEP.

Health is not to be preserved without a regularity in the hours of rising and retiring to rest. The common abuses on those points, necessarily induce numerous indispositions, and often serious disease; for this reason, therefore, the old cannot be too discreet on either head. Their debilitated organs no longer possess sufficient activity; their vigour is too much reduced to allow them, with impunity, to dispense with rest long after the hour that nature dictates. Woe to him who, yielding blindly to his appetites and passions, no longer observes due hours for waking and repose! His pale and haggard countenance, his low spirits, his weakness, pains, and tottering limbs, point out to him, though often too late, the consequence of his imprudence.

Let the individual then, inclined to transgress these rules, remember, that nature

ordained an hour for rest and an hour for labour; that she dedicated the day to activity and employment, the night to silence and refreshment; and that she will seldom pardon the violator of her laws.

Sleep taken in the day-time is always heavy, unrefreshing, and disturbed; how much then is that which we enjoy by night to be preferred, always sweet, regular, and invigorating!

The constitution of some old persons, however, is such, that their health absolutely requires that they should allow themselves but little sleep; for instance, those of a very muscular and sanguine habit, and persons inclined to fat. With the latter moderate exercise slightly fatigues their organs, and reduces them to a proper degree of *em bon point,* and fitting strength. It gives regularity to their secretions and excretions, and prevents the dangers attendant on too great repletion. Even the intellectual powers acquire activity, in-

creased strength and extent, and allow the old enjoyments, which otherwise they would have feared to participate in.

SLEEP.

"Deprive man," said an ancient philosopher, "of sleep and hope, and he becomes the most wretched of animate beings." This is a great physical and moral truth. Indeed, too great exertion enervates both mind and body; exhausts and unhinges all the organs, and lays the train for a host of destructive evils. An early hour of rising, and an equally early hour for retiring to rest, must always be admirable modes of preserving health and strength; and this observation applies to the old in particular. Let them retire at nine in the evening, Winter and Summer, and let nothing then prevent them from resigning themselves to sleep*. But how long, I

* In one case only, the old person may retire at a later hour; namely, when he has eaten more than his accustomed quantity.

may be asked, should they allow themselves to sleep? To this I reply, eight or nine hours, and rarely longer. The school of Salernum, more rigid, would limit the hours of repose to seven, "*Septem horas dormire sat est, juvenique, senique.*" On this head, I cannot give any very precise directions, as they must be greatly regulated by and depend upon the individual and his different wants. But feeble old persons, those who have an excessive appetite, or a dry emaciated habit, may be allowed more sleep than the very corpulent, or those who lead a sedentary life. Rest, however, should never be indulged in to excess; an opposite practice, far from soothing the mind and refreshing the frame, enervates both. Plato was so well aware of this, as to declare that too much sleep was more injurious to mankind than intemperance in eating and drinking. Hypochondriac, plethoric, and gouty old persons should be particularly observant on this head.

The Salernian school, whose maxims may often be cited with benefit, deprecates in the highest degree the very common practice of sleeping after dinner, as being fraught with the worst results. Celsus, Galen, Sandorius, and Lister, on the other hand, speak in very favourable terms of repose after the mid-day's meal, recommending it in particular to those whose stomachs are weak, or digestion bad; to the nervous and delicate, to those whose minds are constantly employed, and in Summer to the inhabitants of warm climates, after a hearty meal. Where it has once become a common habit also, it should not be discontinued, so true is it, to quote the words of Montaigne, "that use is a second nature, whose caprices we must respect more than we are aware of*." But this custom

* Maret de Dijon has published an excellent work on the Siesta, in which he treats in a very learned manner, on the utility or danger of slumber after dinner. He proves, that digestion performs its functions very well during sleep. Besides, my readers are aware, that all Homer's heroes indulged

once acquired, the slumber should not be indulged in more than one hour, and the healthiest position the sleeper can take will be in a large arm chair.

Some aged persons have great difficulty in procuring sleep. It seems as if, at their time of life, nature, trembling at the impending annihilation of the body, seeks to banish far from her presence even this type of death. This sleeplessness once become habitual, may eventually prove pernicious; the fibres must prematurely decay, and death approach more rapidly. This indisposition is more frequently to be found in persons of a sedentary or indolent habit. Sometimes it is occasioned by a peculiar distraction of the vital powers of the stomach, which abandon it, and flow back on other organs. In this class we may probably place some of those old people of whom Lieutaud speaks,

in a nap after dinner, as did both the Greeks and Romans, with equally good effects.

whose obstinate disinclination to sleep could only be obviated by a slight meal taken immediately before bed-time. The bath will be found most efficacious for those whose sleeplessness is caused by very acute itchings. There are likewise many methods, more or less adapted to induce sleep. For instance, reading aloud, in a slow monotonous manner; the gentle noise produced by vessels full of water, so arranged that it may fall, drop by drop, into a sonorous vessel. A continued sound, indeed, if uniform and moderate, is well suited to absorb the attention without fatiguing it, and gives a wonderful inclination to slumber. The murmurings of a stream, the vibrations of a pendulum, or the tones of soft gentle music, or a long uninteresting recital, are often productions of similar results. In some parts of Scotland, chieftains were accustomed to order the bards, or wandering minstrels, to their couches, to recite their verses to them until

they fell asleep; and by these means the poems of Ossian have been handed down to posterity. When this sleeplessness prevails to such a degree that the brain is affected by too great an afflux of ideas, rest may be obtained by fixing the mind intently on some one particular object, or indifferent subject. To produce the like effect, Asclepiades proposed to suspend in a kind of hammock, those afflicted with obstinate disinclination to natural rest.

Some fly for relief to opium, a drug always dangerous, when not administered under medical direction. It induces determination of blood to the head, apoplexy, and different kinds of paralysis; destroys the mind, brutalizes the faculties, and induces a premature old age.

ON MOTION AND EXERCISE.

Man was never created for inactivity; his organs require action, and his limbs motion. Too much sleep deadens and enervates the body, but exercise enlivens and strengthens it; gives new vigour to the principle of life, urging the circulation of all the fluids through their many channels, facilitating the secretion of the different humours, and the rejection of those which must compromise life, if allowed to remain within the frame. But the good effects of exercise are not confined to this point alone; it also prevents or removes the concentration of the vital powers on the brain or stomach, the common result of too much sleep; it establishes or maintains the equilibrium in all the parts, and kindles in some degree the spark of human heat. Addison, though not a physician, was so convinced of its importance, that

he assures his readers, that if man will once accustom himself to regular exercise and temperance, he will stand much less in need of the succours of medicine *.

This great truth, uttered by a very ingenious philosopher, may be supported by numerous examples, with which history furnishes us. Strato, attacked by a severe disease of the spleen, supposed to be incurable, recovered his health by great exercise alone. Galen, of an infirm habit up to the age of thirty, attained a great age by the same method; as did Herodicus, the preceptor of Hippocrates, who was weak and full of humours in his youth. It was from the conviction alone that Socra-

* In ancient Rome, Asclepiades, in particular, recommended his patients to use exercise. Celsus informs us, that he had almost entirely renounced the prescription of internal medicines; and Pliny assures us, lib. vii. cap. 37., that this same Asclepiades had publicly declared, that he was content to pass for a mountebank if ever attacked by illness, or if his death was caused by any thing but old age or accident. He kept his word, living more than a century without any illness, and dying at last from the effects of a violent fall.

tes and Agesilaus entertained of the good effects of exercise, that they did not consider it beneath their dignity to ride a stick with their children; that Scipio-Lælius, and the grand pontiff Scævola, amused themselves by playing at quoits, and made "*ducks and drakes*" by the water-side, to rid their minds of care, and preserve in full vigour their strength and health *.

When employment is added to exercise, it is particularly useful to those who are loaded with too much fat. Celsus says, "*Labor siccat;*" work dries the fibres. Continued until it produces perspiration, exercise has, with persons of this class, the best effects, especially if temperance preside at their repasts, and if they do not partake of too nourishing food. By such a regimen, Galen speedily reduced a very

* Cicero never omitted to devote an hour or two, every day, to walking. Milton, when blind, and no longer able to take exercise by himself, had a machine constructed in his room, in which he used to have himself swung.

fat man, and brought him, to use his own words, "*ad mediocritatem carnis* *."

Those who are phlegmatic, soft of fibre, and naturally inclined to indolence and inactivity, have most reason to commend exercise. To them it is fraught with advantage, as it corrects their vitiated temperament. To what are we to attribute our so seldom finding this temperament and its numerous consequences, amongst the military and labouring classes, but to their being continually, more or less, actively employed? The same hints are equally applicable to the aged, whose stomachs are feeble and slow of digestion. Nothing can be more evident than the invigorating effect, in such instances, of gentle exercise taken before meals.

When we play at billiards, battledore and shuttlecock, take a pleasant walk, or join in an animated and intellectual conversation before dinner, is not the appetite

* De sanitate tuenda, lib. vi.

sharpened, and the digestion accelerated* ? but, on the contrary, if we indulge in too long rest before the dinner hour, digestion becomes slow and painful; the breathing is impeded, the head heavy, the stomach sluggish or relaxed, and the intellects obscured.

On the other hand, I deprecate exercise immediately after meals, which is injurious to almost every old person. Sleep is preferable, particularly for those who are very irritable, nervous, delicate, or subject to heat of the stomach, or to habitual eructations. Amyot had a perfect knowledge of the bad effects of exercise on such subjects; for he says with Plutarch, "that they should not walk after meals, unless," he adds, "they walk quite gently, carefully avoiding over exertion."

The evils of violent, are as great as the

* Pireus, king of Persia, ordered all his subjects to employ themselves in some kind of work, or proportionate exercise, before they eat their meals; for, said this prince, "I would reign over the healthy and robust, and not over a sick people."

advantages of moderate exercise. It speedily destroys the power and energy of all the organs, whilst it induces and hastens the approach of old age. At an advanced period of life, the organs act too slowly; they recruit with too much difficulty the vital principle and natural heat, for it to be advisable to force them to exercise, which is only fitted for youth. We have frequently seen old persons compelled to employ themselves in labour much too hard for their time of life; and the constant result has been a speedy decay. But if exercise be so highly serviceable to them, it is not so in the same proportion under the influence of the various modifications which the air presents in its temperature, its dryness or humidity. When too hot or too cold, too dry or too damp, the air is unfavourable for the exercise the old should take. Under such circumstances, it is wiser for them to retire to rest, or take exercise within doors only, far from places which

would afford only an injurious atmosphere. But what places, it may be asked, should old persons prefer for the purpose of taking exercise, and what exercises will be the most healthful? The country claims the preference. Independent of its charms and beauty, it offers advantages peculiar to itself, not to be found in the midst of cities, the customs of which are unsuited to them; life there is too active, and demands too much vital power, without which the inconveniences attached to it are not to be resisted; a country life, on the contrary, is more within the reach of the old person, and more favourable to the attainment of longevity. In the country we live in an open atmosphere, its pure pleasures supply a variety of delights; we see the heavens; an annoying neighbour does not abridge us of the light of day; we are not confined to our apartments as in town; we can take exercise; we obtain unadulterated food; and the mind, unshackled, is not as

sailed by vexations and annoyances. Nor must we forget the enjoyment of the genial warmth of the sun, or of a good fire, and the healthy freshness of the woods, vallies, and streams.

In the country too, we may dig, rear, and cultivate plants, and watch their growth, decay, and fall; valuable studies, wholesome exercises, which refresh and confirm the health. Nor is the mind unimproved thereby; it acquires more serenity and content, and the passions are calmed and moderated. How enviable is the possession of a beautiful garden! The air, impregnated with sweets, inhaled into the lungs, seems to give new life, stimulating and even vivifying the organs.

How many eminent philosophers, the honour of former ages, and who reached the utmost limits of old age, passed the greatest part of their lives in their gardens! Epicurus declares, that no greater or more healthy amusement can be found. We know

too, that gardening was the delight of Homer, Horace, and Virgil*.

A country walk is preferable to all others; or in spacious gardens, where the air is dry and pure, in fine Spring weather; in the Summer, during morning and evening, and not in the heat of the day. On the other hand, damp and marshy situations, deep vallies, and narrow streets, where the air is ever impregnated with the materials of disease, cannot be too much avoided. Sometimes walking, at others exercise on horseback, may be resorted to. The former strengthens the legs, and gives suppleness to the joints; it is to be preferred by the gouty, those subject to piles, or old persons of a weak habit; riding, on the contrary, is better suited to individuals who suffer from slight swelling of the abdomen, the asthmatic, rheumatic, or those who labour under suppressed piles. To the latter,

* "Fortunatus est ille deos qui novit agrestes,
Panaque, sylvanumque senem, nymphasque sorores!"

especially, Sydenham recommends this exercise; he only excepts those whose piles are very painful, or persons affected with stone and hernia. For them a carriage is better; as also for corpulent or feeble individuals, and those of an advanced age; the asthmatic, and those of a dry and thin habit; but to be attended with the desired effect, the motion of the vehicle should be gentle; it might otherwise occasion determination of blood to the head, vertigo, and annoying or dangerous vomitings. Exercise on foot is, however, not to be neglected; it is that best suited to man; and when nature gave him legs, she intended him to use them; and not that he should be continually *cradled* in a carriage. Bacon recommends persons attacked by complaints in the kidneys to play at bowls; this might, however, be dangerous, where it occasions any pain in these regions. He also strongly advises the use of the bow, to the rheu-

matic and asthmatic; billiards and tennis may with equal justice be recommended*.

If particular causes compel an old person to remain within doors; if he cannot walk out, let him follow the example of the celebrated Addison, who, not being always able to mount his horse, accustomed himself every morning to pull a bell without any clapper; he sometimes varied this exercise by the use of dumb-bells, which he called "fighting with his shadow;" this action exercises the limbs, opens the chest, and affords all the pleasure of a real combat, without any of its unpleasant effects. Addison adds, "I could wish that several learned men would lay out that time which they employ in controversies and disputes about nothing, in *this method* of fighting with their own shadows. It might conduce very much to evaporate the spleen.

* Many other exercises are, likewise, very suitable to the old. Socrates, who considered dancing highly healthful, did not hesitate to learn it, when already rather advanced in life.

which makes them uneasy to the public as well as to themselves *."

Old persons would find great benefit from a general motion of the whole body in a room, all the windows of which should be open, if the weather is not too cold. In this situation, I have heard it recommended to raise the arms, the body leaning forward on the points of the feet, and to let them sink alternately, bringing the weight of the body on the heels; thus every muscle is brought into action, and every organ must experience the influence of the motion.

A greater or less degree of impulse, but always regular, given to the chair in which a feeble person sits, may be substituted with success for this exercise. First, two pieces of flat wood should be placed under the two feet of the chair, diagonally opposite. This rocking movement is peculiarly advantageous to those who are deprived of

* Spectator, No. 116. Vol. ii.

the use of their limbs, or to the very weak and delicate. Celsus, Galen, Oribases, and Antyllus, have also advised this motion in a bed, as useful to feeble and exhausted old persons. This cannot be doubted, in the different cases where all the vital functions seem in a state of inaction. To accomplish it, some solid body should be placed under two feet of the bed obliquely opposite; the bed itself should then be pushed from side to side by another person, and the invalid will receive shocks, more or less powerful, which reanimate the strength of all the organs, and increase the vigour of the vital system. The bed may also be suspended, and the invalid can rock himself by pulling a string, placed at a certain distance, and fixed to the floor of the room; the consequent motion calms and soothes pain, and induces sleep, hope, and sometimes health itself.

There are other exercises equally useful for the old. Amongst them Plutarch re-

commends reading aloud, singing, and light and animated conversation. The ancients were much in favour of this remedy, which they prescribed to persons of weak and delicate chest. We should, however, except the case of asthmatic persons.

Reading aloud, and singing likewise, are not to be commenced until an hour or two after meals; sooner indulged in, they might distract the strength necessary to good digestion. Common every-day chat is widely different, and is highly to be commended. This pleasing resource is, perhaps, in the present day too rarely to be met with. Confidence, openness of heart, the frankness of our ancestors, are succeeded by taciturnity, reserve, distrust, and prejudice. At table, we are more occupied in hopes of aggrandisement than in enjoyment, or a wish of being conducive to the happiness of our friends and neighbours.

OF EMPLOYMENT AND REST.

Man is made for labour; his existence, his health, and his very happiness are most closely connected with it. "The gods, says Hesiod, "have placed labour in the view of virtue; if the road which conducts man thither be rough and difficult of access, it becomes smoother and better in proportion as we proceed. The man, resolved to traverse it with a firm unshrinking step, will speedily find its paths full of charms, and leading to regions of peace and happiness." This advice is addressed to the individual in the zenith of health; but it is much less applicable to those sinking into the vale of years.

To the great, in particular, of every rank, to the minister, the placeman, and aspiring man, I should say, "avoid an excess of employment no longer suited to your age. Be not your own enemy; be

not, in a degree, instrumental to your own fate, by preferring eminent or lucrative stations, which, while they feed your pride or vanity, do not always confer happiness to a pleasing retirement. But if your interests require this sacrifice, do not wait until your strength is totally exhausted, and your body a prey to disease and infirmity; if you do, pityless death will speedily destroy your air-built castles, your dreams and hopes of happiness. Never forget that old age, ill suited for turbulent activity, stands in need of gentle and quiet pleasures, and is unequal to severe labours." It is the period of life when we ought daily to retrench some little part of our habitual employments, in order, finally, to give them up altogether, the better to qualify ourselves for the last charms of existence*. But it is more especially in very advanced

* At Rome, the laws released a senator from his public duties at the age of sixty-five. They restored him then to private life, if he was no longer inclined to serve the Republic.

old age, in the "decrepitus" of the ancients, when we drag our limbs along with difficulty, that an almost constant rest is more absolutely necessary. Bacon, indeed, declares, that at such a period of life we should remain constantly in bed, particularly during the Winter. This advice, however, must be greatly dependant on the constitution; rest is, certainly, one of the most invaluable auxiliaries to the health of the aged. To enjoy it without apprehension or danger, they should abandon their habitual occupations gradually. Experience must convince us of the hazard of an opposite proceeding. This observation applies to every act of life.

The robust as well as the weak must observe this rule; but what must be the effects of its neglect on those greatly enfeebled by age and sickness? If, on the other hand, considerable strength remain, this constant rest is not only unnecessary, but may even be pernicious. We should

seek pleasing and quiet avocations, which fix the mind and support its activity. If attached to literature, poetry claims the preference. It is a gentle and salutary employment, without which those who are accustomed to it degenerate into mere machines. "Rest without learning," says Seneca, "is the entombment of a living and thinking being." Prolonged inaction also would eventually disturb the most important vital functions; would suspend that most salutary one, transpiration, the regularity of which is the very thermometer of health. But can the old person cultivate literature with equal advantage to himself and it? The first point is answered. We shall reply to the second by citing numerous examples, which demonstrate that many have distinguished themselves by their literary labours at the most advanced age. Gorgias, of Leontium, reached the age of 108 years, without having discontinued his studies. Isocrates wrote his Panathenea

at the age of 94. Theophrastus, when 99 years old, wrote his Characteristics. Cato learned Greek at 70. In our own times, Voltaire composed his "Tancrède," at the age of 66; and the great Fox was studying several languages, when death robbed his country of his services. How pitiable then are those old men who, destitute of courage and energy, prematurely renounce the faculties of life, and seem to adopt the indolent Indian maxim—"It is better to sit than to walk; and better to sleep than to wake*." Like the Hottentots, they consider the exercise of thought but a troublesome task, and that it is wise to abandon the mind to a premature dissolution. Such a line of conduct must generate the most complete brutality, leading also in its train apoplexy, different obstructions, piles, dropsy, and the numerous phalanx of chronic disorders.

* Raynal, Hist. Philos. des deux Indes.

ON THE INTELLECTUAL FACULTIES AND THE PASSIONS.

The whole of human life is occupied by different sensations and affections, without which it could not be preserved or sustained. By their means alone, man has the consciousness and feeling of his existence; but if he would live in health, in full enjoyment of all his functions and in happiness, he must regulate their number, their force and energy. Too numerous, too active, or ill directed, they painfully affect the physical organization, subvert the powers of the mind, and cause diseases, alike distressing and numerous. For this reason, therefore, the old man cannot too strictly watch over himself, nor study too closely the rules prescribed by this science with regard to his sensations and his propensities. Necessity rigorously impels him to this study, which is so much the more use-

ful to him, as it is at his age, in particular, that the mind is more speedily affected by the slightest causes, which are the active principles of physical and moral disorders and troubles, almost always dangerous in their consequences.

The faculties of his mind and body will be no losers by this self-examination. Like the organs which they animate, they decay with time; and with old age they lose their energy, strength and activity. Man has it more in his power to moderate, to diminish such a degradation, and to prevent such humiliation, than he is aware of. This end is best to be attained by an unwearied attention to the cultivation of his thoughts and mind, and by supplying them with the best precepts of morality and philosophy. The mind and intellect have been, with justice, compared to a lamp, which goes out if we neglect to supply it with oil. Exercise, and a moderate degree of activity, impart to them more force,

elasticity, and extent. St. Augustine, therefore, did not judge with his usual discrimination, when he advises the old to wrap themselves up within themselves, and to look quietly on while the current of life ebbs, drop by drop. Old age, in following such a recommendation, would only add to its pains and woes. I repeat, study, distraction of thought, a slight bodily occupation, are the true elements of the happiness of this age, and the only means, as Cicero declares, to render life worth enjoying. A poet reminds us, that "moderation is the treasure of the prudent man; it will regulate his fancies, his labours, and his pleasures, and keep a proper check over his passions and desires." We may, indeed, conceive that intellectual exertions, when ill regulated, or too closely pursued, must eventually induce a multiplicity of accidents, exhaustion of the vital powers, and a rapid and miserable decrepitude. The mind, therefore, requires occupations,

but these must be selected with discrimination, and be conformable to the age that needs them. The most advisable employments for the old are those which afford play to the imagination; they are much better suited to the support of health than deep researches, which demand too much thought, and too great an effort of the intellectual faculties. Who, on the other hand, can be blind to the pleasing impressions and delicious sensations that the contemplation of the universe, and the studies of painting, poetry, or music offer? All these recreative employments purify the imagination, banish chagrin and melancholy, and furnish increased vitality, the attendant of health, to the frame. Of the truth of this Bacon was well aware. He recommended to the old the reading of poetry, the view of a landscape, and every study capable of filling the mind with grand and beautiful objects, such as history, fables, or the wonderful works of nature.

Memory is one of the most precious powers of the mind, and imperiously demands every attention on the part of the old. If in their case its powers are diminished, it is because they have neglected it. When advanced in years, we become careless, and the mind, losing its expanse, no longer cares for any thing but for its individual wants. It is the age of egotism, which we can never combat too strongly. The surest way of doing so with success, is to interest ourselves in every thing around us; to call perpetually to mind the actions, the enjoyments, and all the events of life, but more especially those of our childhood. The first result of this course will ever be a lively enjoyment, well calculated to strengthen the springs of life.

Vespasian, after his elevation to the purple, so highly valued this pleasure, that he could never bring himself to make the slightest alteration in the style of his paternal abode, although it was of very ordi-

nary appearance, in order that nothing might efface from his mind the pleasing images which his memory retraced in the spot where his earliest years were passed. He even felt a pleasure, on festivals, in drinking out of a wooden cup which had belonged to his grandmother *.

The old man should also take every care to regulate his fancies, to submit his passions to the yoke of reason, and give them sufficient pliancy to accommodate them with facility to every situation of life and vicissitude of fortune. It is rather by allowing himself to be led, than impelled by circumstances, that he will most easily attain this end.

The passions are generally less imperious, and have less ascendancy over the vital functions, when man verges towards

* Neither nature nor art present any medicines which can restore to memory its earlier activity. Gulielmo Gratarola, a physician of Pergamos, has, however, left us a little Treatise, intituled, "De memoriâ et reminiscentiâ reparandâ, augendâ, conservandâque, &c."

his decline. They are all at this period more feeble and moderate, and sometimes even disappear for ever. If, on the other hand, they preserve their full force, and disturb the harmony of the vital action, every means must be resorted to, to keep them within due bounds. When too suddenly defined, they will not fail to wear away the principle of life, and to strike the old with sudden death. Melancholy passions, in particular, have this unhappy privilege.

But of all the great passions of the soul, the most powerful in man, and that which sometimes remains, even during the frost of age, is love, that sublime passion, but which is no longer adapted for him; it is to youth alone that it exclusively appertains. Reason wills and commands it, and health requires it. A life passed in the midst of voluptuousness, when we are old and enervated, produces nothing but pains and griefs. Venus does not love wrinkles

and weakness, and will always repulse the wretched man, who flatters himself that he is robust enough to sacrifice at her shrine*. Let him reflect, and imitate Sophocles, who, Amyot tells us, "rejoiced in escaping from the chains of love and pleasure, as from the yoke of an imperious and dangerous master."

The pleasures of love, in fact, threaten the old with a crowd of ills, which deteriorate their health, and bring them quickly to the grave, unless reason reminds them to renounce it for ever. Amongst them are to be numbered trembling limbs, inevitable results of the inroads made on the powers of sensibility and muscular contractility; the fire of animal heat becomes exhausted; the cutaneous transpiration becomes irregular or suppressed; the intellectual faculties are enfeebled; the mind loses its strength and vivacity, and the judgment

* "Sperne voluptates; nocet, empta dolore, voluptas."
Horace, Sat. 1. Epist. ii.

its precision. This applies, in particular, to those who are feeble and full of humours. It is absolutely necessary on their part. Why, besides, should they delay to the last moment their retreat from the field of love? It must at last be disgraceful. Let them, rather, make it honourably, and not when obliged, with Horace, to exclaim, " I have resigned the arms I can no longer wield." This rule, however, is by no means without its exceptions; for instance, individuals who have never abused the pleasures of love, who are endowed with a robust constitution, and are not attacked by any of the indispositions incident to old age. These pleasures, in such cases, seem to double their existence, to excite and keep up a mild harmony in the vital action*; but here also moderation is to be observed.

With the person who in early life plunged in the full tide of pleasure, and gave full vent to voluptuousness, it is greatly differ-

* Celsus declares, that " Coitus modicus excitat."

ent; he should forswear with prudence, what must now only cause him regret. The wiser course remains to him: let him employ the few remaining moments of life in pleasures better adapted to his feeble state. By this well chosen direction of his faculties, he will become a useful and worthy member of society.

If he must banish love from his mind, society still offers him a thousand other enjoyments, more conformable to his situation and his taste. For the old person, indeed, are reserved those seductive illusions, and the crowd of desires, which give an impulse to his heart, animate him, and sometimes lend him some part of his youthful strength. Is it not at his time of life, also, that almost every inquietude and painful thought dies away, to give place to the caresses of his offspring, to the pleasing prattle of one, the sports of another, and the precocious talent of a third? In these consists the true happiness of the aged.

Moderate gaiety, according to Bacon, is another of its most active principles. It is that which animates society, and it is silence which destroys it. Gaiety is the best preservative against anxiety and grief; it is the golden panacea, the secret of longevity, and the elixir of life. It renovates the nervous system; reanimates the oscillations of the capillary vessels; facilitates the circulation, secretion, and expulsion of the fluids. How different the result, if we abandon ourselves to the melancholy influence of sadness, fear and hate, which paralyse all these movements! But joy and gaiety, on the contrary, give activity to transpiration, render digestion easier and better, sleep more regular and refreshing, the cure of sickness easier, the period of convalescence shorter, and life itself longer! We must, however, always bear in mind, that the most useful things may become pernicious when abused, and that the human mind seldom preserves the just me-

dium. Luther says it resembles a drunken clown on horseback; raise him on one side, he falls over on the other. In fact joy, when unexpected or excessive, is as dangerous as it is beneficial when moderate. Fouquet died suddenly, on hearing that Louis XIV. had restored him to liberty; and Pope Leo X. died of joy, on receiving the intelligence of the disasters of the French. Chilo, Diagoras, and Philipides, died while embracing their sons, who had returned victors from the Olympic games.

Laughter is not without its good effects; and if gravity be essential to the good breeding and dignity of old age, nothing can justify a repulsive severity. Laughter is by no means inconsistent with this dignity; and the greatest men did not disdain to indulge in it, when they considered it conducive to health. Aristotle and Plato, who are commonly considered as most grave and serious beings, were occasionally very lively; they laughed with their

friends; and Pascal has very ably remarked, that when they composed their laws and political treatises, it was to amuse and divert their minds; their philosophy consisted chiefly in leading a simple and tranquil life. Nor did they despise the sports of infancy. They joined their dances, their exercises, to renovate, as they declared, their minds and imaginations, by the pleasing emotions they gave birth to. Horace advises us to blend a little folly with wisdom; it will always be pleasant to do it at will and at the proper time*.

The advantages of laughter are nearly allied to those of joy, and are highly beneficial for the lungs and circulatory and digestive organs. Uneasiness, pains in the stomach, and obstinate colic, are often dissipated by its operation; and it frequently prevents or conquers slight obstructions. But, like joy, it is highly dangerous to any

* "Misce stultitiam consiliis brevem:
Dulce est desipere in loco." Lib. iv. Od. 11.

excess. Xeuxis having painted an old woman of a most ridiculously comic appearance, laughed so immoderately that he died. Crysippus became the victim of an idea which struck him as very ridiculous *.

Unhappily man, in the vale of years, far from loving joy and the mild sensations of the heart, is much more inclined to melancholy, ennui, timidity, or the fear of death. He hesitates on every point, wavers and deliberates incessantly, and the season of action is lost before he has formed any resolution. What are the probable causes which thus modify the character of the old, disturbing his rest and happiness? They are numerous, and most of them closely connected with the feebleness of his existence; but one of the most active is, perhaps, the indifference of those around him; the neglect and inaction in which they allow him to languish. In Lacedemonia more respect was shewn to old age. Its

* Diogenes Laertius, Vol. ii. p. 195.

steps were followed with love and veneration. It was passed in salutary activity; it was kept employed, and therefore happy to the end of existence. You who surround the old, and charged with the care of ministering to their comforts, keep their sensibility constantly in play; place it in the most pleasing and most consoling situations, you will thus add to their existence, which will ever be prolonged more when stimulated by the pleasures of the mind, and the pulsations of a quiet and contented heart.

"The pleasure of being beloved renews existence," says St. Lambert. How great is the difference, on the contrary, in the old person left to himself? Is he not speedily tormented with, and soon a prey to melancholy passions, and their consequent ills? Weariness pursues and incessantly disturbs him, unless he can distract his attention, and turn his mind to employment; bodily employment, for the man whose

mind is confined to his sensations; and employment of the intellect for him that education has rendered a thinking being. This remedy is infallible.

Old age is also distrustful; and is ever ready to sacrifice all to self-interest. This is owing to a weakness of mind and the treachery of mankind. They are dreaded because he has often had reason to complain of them. This feeling is as dangerous as painful. Life presents to the old person nothing but a system of defensive warfare, and his spirits are irrecoverably lost. If he wish to detach his mind from so much anxiety, let him have kindlier feelings to those around him; let his memory recal to him nothing but noble and great actions; let him give the friends, who will one day close his eyes, credit for more generosity, and he will not fail to become happier and more tranquil.

A search after aggrandizement, a desire of great riches, too often prey upon the

mind of him who is advanced in years, and often snap the thread of life. It is, without doubt, prudent to be prepared against want; but we must say it is folly, when we see the trouble and pains the old man takes to acquire titles and treasures, which he can no longer enjoy. Let him leave this care to aspiring youth, and follow Plutarch's advice to Paccius, "Ever bear in mind what you have often heard me say, that the Patrician shoe will not cure the gouty foot; the precious ring, the whitlow on the finger; nor the diadem, the aching head."

Fear of death is very common to most old people. Nothing renders them so unhappy as this; they dread that which they cannot avoid, and which may surprise them every instant. They tremble in the midst of enjoyments; they forbid themselves every thing, because every thing may serve as a conductor to death, forgetting that this very fear is, in fact, often the cause of it.

Indeed, those who live in constant fear of death never reach an advanced age; anguish and anxiety destroy them. Why, too, should they dread an event necessary to every animate being? Nothing can ever hinder this fatal termination; poor and rich are equally liable to it*. "To learn to die, represent to yourselves the crowd of unhappy wretches attached to life, who grasp it as the shipwrecked person clings to the roots and rocks; floating between the fear of death and the torments of life, they cannot live and know not how to die. Render life then as agreeable as possible, by ceasing to torment yourselves respecting it. Possession can please no longer if we are not resigned to its loss; and the least painful loss is that which is not succeeded by regrets." This, Seneca says, as applicable to the old. Imitate the example of the numerous wise old men, who do honour

* "Pallida mors æquo pulsat pede pauperum tabernas Regumque turres." HORACE, Lib. i. Od. 4.

to antiquity, Hesiod, Homer, Democritus, Plato, and many others, who viewed the approach of death without fear, and slept in peace with their forefathers. Anacreon, on the verge of the grave, still sported with the Graces; a pure and innocent joy thawed the frost of his old age, whilst he crowned his hoary hair with roses. Tibullus, Catullus, and Horace, also freely joined the image of death to their pleasures; invited it to their festivities, and we may say to their tables as a guest, who, far from filling them with sadness, warned them to enjoy the present moment *. The only means of remedying the fear of death, is to familiarize ourselves with its image. Who can be happier than him who, having contemplated closely, and with courage, this invincible enemy, finally views it with indifference, and in the midst of gaiety thinks of death, without fearing its attacks?

* Montaigne informs us, that he wished to accustom himself to death, and habituate himself to it, by constant reflection.

CHAP. II.

EXPLANATION OF THE PRINCIPLES OF THE ART OF PRESERVING HEALTH, APPLICABLE TO THE INDISPOSITIONS OF OLD AGE.

SECTION III.

INJURY OF THE VISUAL FUNCTION.

SIGHT is the queen of all the senses, the mother of the arts and sciences, and the generous benefactress who causes the most enchanting sensations. Too many pleasing enjoyments are attached to its preservation, for man to be justified in neglecting the means of extending or bringing to perfection its activity. It is when he grows old, in particular, when pains and indispositions at last warn him to husband his strength, that he is more frequently me-

naced with the loss of this precious sense, or with a diminution of its force and clearness. How do these accidents originate? From social habits, the vices they engender, and the complete ignorance of all, as to the causes which injure its action. It shall be our care to point out the proper remedies.

EVERSION OF THE EYE-LID.

One of the most disagreeable inconveniences of the protecting organs of the eye, is the eversion of the lower eye-lid. Common with old persons, it is often incurable; for the relaxation of the texture of this ocular veil, the primitive cause of this complaint is but little susceptible of correction; the weeping which accompanies it in particular, is one of its unpleasant effects. It may be sometimes prevented by avoiding study in the evening, or at too late an hour of night; or by declining the use of the numerous lotions of tepid water,

which the old too frequently employ to unglue the eye-lids in the morning. It may also sometimes be remedied by exposing these parts to the action of a dry heat, and the vapours of aromatic substances; by fomenting with water rather cold, or slightly diluted with spirits, and by carefully protecting them from the action of damp winds and smoke. Strengthening regimen is to be adopted, and salt, high-flavoured food, and spirituous wines are carefully to be avoided.

INFLAMED OR RED EYES, AND WEAK SIGHT.

The eyes of many old persons are red, and often much inflamed, occasioned frequently by the existence of tetters, or the bad habit many imbibe of rubbing the eyes violently on waking. Too active labour at night, or keeping the eyes too long fixed on the fire, also give a great tendency to these attacks. On the other hand, if they avoid the light and seek dark situations,

these diseases, far from diminishing, increase; as they do also when the eyes are covered by a considerable quantity of bandages, which are always hurtful from their pressure. Persons thus affected, and indeed all persons whose sight is weak, will find themselves much benefited by living in a well and equally lighted room; the windows should not look out on walls where the sun's rays fall perpendicularly. If obliged to work near a candle, they will moderate its too great light by the means proper for this purpose; their clothes should leave every part of the body at full liberty; the eyes should be often washed during the day, with cold and fresh spring or river water. Tepid water, or saline liquids, redden these organs; and rendering them too sensible to the light, excite tears; any abuse of indigestible food, vinegar and spirituous liquors is to be avoided.

The eyes should not be disturbed after meals; too long sleep, as well as too great

watching are to be shunned. Excessive work by night deprived Milton of his sight. All labours connected with objects of very small dimensions, such as reading very small print, are highly injurious. The use of spectacles cannot be denied; the preference is to be given to those which are concave on both sides, or biconvex; the rays of light reuniting give a livelier impression to the *retina*, and the sight becomes clearer and more distinct.

Weak sight is more particularly the malady of old age, and this stage of life is more inclined also to long sight or *presbyopia*. This is caused by the drying of the crystalline humour, and the diminution of the humours of the eye, which cause the *cornea* to lose its convexity, while the luminous rays lose their refraction. In such a state, the rays of light which proceed from some near object, no longer converge sufficiently in their passage through the eye, which is absolutely necessary for dis-

tinct sight. To remedy this, the objects we wish to look at should be kept at some distance, and spectacles should be used which assist the eyes to refract, and to bring the luminous rays sufficiently near. It is generally difficult to determine, clearly, the period at which these instruments should be used, and still more so their proper form. Some persons take to them much too soon, whilst others are guilty of great neglect in their use. Many think, that at a certain age of life spectacles are absolutely indispensible, and on this foolish prejudice is founded the bad habit amongst spectacle-makers of preparing glasses for every age. This is often more injurious than beneficial to the sight. We know too, that the formation of the eye is different in every person; the care taken of them or neglect of them in early life, are circumstances which greatly influence the age when spectacles become indispensibly necessary, as well as their proper shape.

To discover the fitting time when they should be resorted to; 1st, We must remark exactly to what point the sight will extend—at what distance we can discern objects most distinctly. We know, that in cases of *presbyopia,* we are obliged to hold at some distance those small objects we wish to see clearly; 2d, We then, by an unaccustomed movement approach nearer to the light when we read or work; 3d, Small objects become obscure when we look at them long, especially when they are shining, or of a very bright colour; 4th, The eyes, on the least tension, become quickly fatigued, and we are forced to turn them to other objects, to give them some relief; 5th, The sight on waking is very weak, and only recovers its accustomed power after the lapse of some hours.

When these different symptoms shew themselves, we should temporize no longer, and good spectacles should be speedily procured. They should not magnify too

powerfully, but should enable the wearer to see with clearness. They should be such, as that with their help we may read easily at the same distance as when in the full vigour of sight. They should be free from all spots, rays, and stars; of an equal thickness in all their parts, and of the same shape. The glass adapted for the one eye should never be used for the other; and they should, therefore, never be displaced. Wollaston's periscopic spectacles are admirably made in these respects. Most of the common spectacles are to be rejected; they are badly matched, ill polished, of unequal thickness in the glasses, and frequently have flaws, crookedness, and other imperfections. Superior spectacles have none of these defects. They preserve their magnifying power in every part of their surface, without any want of sphericity, whilst they distribute the light, in an equal degree of intensity, over every part of the visual organs. Those are wrong who use

spectacles at night and not during the day; it is certainly imprudent. It is better to have always a second pair, of slight magnifying power, for the evening; the other will serve for the occupations of the day. The *retina* by this means receives an almost equal quantity of light at all times, and the eyes preserve their vigour better.

Green glasses are, in most cases, better suited to the greater number, as they modify the impression of the light upon the eyes; many weak eyed persons, however, are injured by them; they should always be abandoned, when white or slightly coloured objects appear red. This is a certain proof that they would destroy the sight.

TENDENCY TO APOPLEXY.

Apoplexy is always a dangerous malady; against which we can never be too much on our guard. Hippocrates declared it incurable if severe, and very difficult of cure when slight. Experience proves that his assertion was but too well founded, and every day, in the bosom of happiness, and in the midst of joy and pleasure, this frightful malady sweeps away a host of victims.

Though every temperament may be predisposed to its attacks, some are more so than others. It is always to be dreaded when the constitution is strong, or the temperament highly sanguine; when the skin is of a deep red tint; when the vessels or muscles are strongly developed; when the chest is wide; the neck thick and short; the face full and red, and the eye sometimes bloodshot. It frequently exists with the old person subject to periodical nasal

bleedings, heaviness and pain of the head, vertigo, palpitation of the temporal arteries, strong inclination to drowsiness, flatulence, eructation, swelling of the abdomen, constipation, numbness of the limbs, or a prickly sensation on the skin.

Apoplexy is impending when the visual functions are disordered, when fire or sparks appear, when the ear is annoyed by tinglings, or when the sense of touch loses its activity; when any difficulty of pronunciation of certain words appears, or slight convulsive motions and grinding of the teeth, and sometimes more difficult or quick breathing. The individual who has observed in his frame a greater or less number of these symptoms, has received sufficient warning to fortify himself against the attacks of apoplexy. Every faculty should be called into action to repel causes which might lend strength to such dangerous symptoms. Let him avoid every excess, and always cultivate and bear in

mind the wise precepts of the art of preserving health. Let him remember too, that, surrounded on every side with the appearances of this malady, he has more peculiarly to fear a damp atmosphere, the too continued action of the sun's rays, rich or luxurious food *, an abuse of wine, liqueurs, or coffee; the suppression of an habitual bloody flux, a sedentary life, a disturbed mind, unwearied mental labour, violent grief, strong fits of passion or disappointed ambition.

Lancisi and Van Swieten mention, that they knew many old persons whose deaths were caused by their inhabiting rooms, the walls of which had not been long plastered. I should particularly recommend the aged, who dread this frightful malady, never to stir out in damp weather; above all, during Winter. Sydenham and Stoll have in-

* It is by no means uncommon to see a privation of substantial food, or too long a fast, cause apoplexy. The latter habit, above all others, has most dangerous effects on literary and scientific men.

formed us, that this season caused the most dangerous impressions on the head. Discard all clothing which may impéde the circulation of the blood; let there be no pressure on the neck and limbs; let the head be bare, or at best have very little covering, except when exposed to the sun. "Warm feet, clear head, and free bowels," was the advice of the illustrious Boerhaave to apoplectic persons. When you have reason to dread a speedy attack, apply bandages to the head steeped in cold water, snow or pounded ice, mixed with salt. Let your meals be light and short; banish every kind of intemperance; partake of no more than one, or at most two dishes; dilute the wine you drink with abundance of water; abstain even altogether from the use of this liquor, often as pernicious as seductive, if your stomach is sufficiently strong to enable you to dispense with it.

The bowels should always be kept relaxed, by means of whey, chicken broth,

and glysters; the transpiration should be assisted by occasional tepid baths and friction, more or less powerful, according to the sensibility of the skin, repeated every day (especially in the morning) of the lower extremities. The feet should be placed in water, to which common kitchen salt or mustard has been added. They should not be kept in it more than five or six minutes, or the result may be quite different to what is expected.

Snuff, the effect of which on the brain is sufficiently powerful to cause a great afflux of blood thither, is little suited to the apoplectic, to those whose headaches are accompanied with palpitations of the temporal arteries, nasal bleedings, or redness and turgidity of the face. If this habit of snuff-taking be of old standing, it cannot be discontinued immediately. If any uneasiness is experienced from leaving off the practice, it must be resumed, but with moderation.

The hours of waking and retiring to rest should be regulated. An excess in either would be equally dangerous. Exercise should be gentle and regular. Riding should be often resorted to, as it assists and excites the secretion of the humours, and draws the blood towards the lower extremities. Mental exertions are to be well regulated, always slight, and never protracted or forced. Subjects of deep research cannot be sufficiently avoided; a few pages of a novel, or of some simple history, are always preferable to too abstruse studies. The transports of love, joy or anger, are but so many enemies ever ready to spring on their victim. Too many old persons, men of the greatest ability, and amiable philosophers, have fallen by a disregard of these important precepts. In some cases leeches, in others emetics, have produced the best effects; but the physician alone is the person competent to judge when these should be applied.

ON CATARRH.

The quantity of saliva that most old persons reject, partly supplies the cutaneous transpiration, a function which with them has lost most of its activity. It then becomes a natural and necessary excretion. The same observation applies to the profusion of mucus passed from the nostrils of many others*. The case is very different as regards the mucous humour produced by catarrh, a disease very common in old age, and against which too many precautions cannot be taken. We often hear an old person say, "I am very well; I have only a cold;" but to one of this class the answer of Tissot was, "colds kill more persons than the pestilence." Indeed catarrh is almost always highly dangerous

* Many old people are subject to colds in the head, which are a good preventive in the case of those whose faces, red and bloated, shew plainly that the blood is impelled in too great quantity towards the brain.

to the aged. Their lungs and the stomach, which is a kind of stimulant to them, having lost much of their strength, the treatment becomes very different, and cure often impracticable. This is especially observable in cold damp Winters. But what preventives, my readers will ask, are the old to make use of against so fatal a disease?

Their first care should be to avoid sudden transitions of the atmosphere, and remaining in damp rooms. When any situation is changed, it must be by insensible degrees. It is not, as is vulgarly supposed, in the open air that colds are caught; it is, on the contrary, when we return quickly home and get close to a warm fire, forgetting that this rapid change, from a cold air to great heat, must cause congestion and inflammation of the lungs.

Catarrh may also be avoided by always keeping the head uniformly covered. Many take cold by covering their head very warmly during the night, and but little by

day. The action of the skin may be kept up by wearing flannel waistcoats, woollen stockings, and by dry or medicated frictions over the whole surface of the body, before a blazing fire. Celsus recommended frequent friction of the head. Winter clothing should never be left off until late, and resumed on the first appearance of cold.

The powers of the stomach may be kept up by some good food, taken in moderation, a little old wine, particularly such as is bitter or very sweet. The force of transpiration is to be assisted, not by hot and enervating drinks, but by such as are slightly tonic, by a moderate infusion of orange or *scordium* leaves, or camomile flowers. If before the attack the patient has been habitually subject to piles, which have since become suppressed, they should, if possible, be renewed. Gentle exercise within or out of doors, on horseback, in a carriage, bowls or billiards, are to be added to the other modes prescribed on this head.

But if these should be ineffectual, and this disorder should have already made its appearance, redoubled activity must be employed to diminish its violence. The presence of a physician is imperiously necessary, to prevent the errors into which the unlearned person might fall. What indeed would be the plan adopted by him? He would load himself with covering, gorge the stomach with hot or stimulating fluids, which would be adding fuel to the flame. Too warm covering is a very dangerous error; it increases the weakness of the lungs and stomach, often the cause of the malady; renders the body still weaker, and by exciting excessive perspiration, the disorder increases, and carries off the unfortunate being, who was buoyed up with the hope of a speedy cure. A more reasonable line of conduct generally produces the most favourable results. Be careful not to weaken the stomach by too many tepid and debilitating drinks, nor, on the other

hand, excite it by heating ptisans, which may lay the ground-work of inflammation of the lungs. Let the patient eat but little, or even fast; as this alone has often effected a cure. Make but little addition to the ordinary clothing, which, together with a few cups of any vegetable infusion, will induce slight perspiration. Do not lie too long in bed, or remain too much in your room, out of the pure air, and in an artificially heated atmosphere. Such practices enervate, produce relapses, or prolong the disease indefinitely. Oily mucilaginous lozenges, the thickened juices of sweet fruits, such as jujubes, dates, and almond emulsions, have little or no efficacy in this affection. They irritate the stomach and increase its weakness.

If the cold be very obstinate, if weak lungs be the presumptive cause of it, brisker exercise must be used; sawing wood, for instance; and the bed-room may be fumigated with the vapour of benzoin or sweet herbs.

ON ASTHMA.

This malady is incident to every time of life, but in particular to old age. If it often threatens life, the subject of its attacks, on the other hand, in despite of its dangers, often reaches a very advanced age. Daily experience confirms this observation. This affection is either nervous and spasmodic, or humoral. The latter, however, in the opinion of many medical men, is but a complication of the former with catarrh. Asthma is seldom simple, and most individuals who believe themselves asthmatic, from their difficulty of respiration, should attribute their sufferings to nothing but the development of some disease in the belly or chest, of which asthma is but the consequence. In some hereditary cases, it may also owe its origin to various and very multiplied causes, or to an irregular mode of life. The attacks

which constitute it are also often numerous in the year, or sometimes confined to one only; varieties which often depend on temporary causes.

Care must be taken to prevent these attacks. Once developed, medicine has little power over them, and at most can only diminish their force and violence. An asthmatic attack once felt, the person affected cannot too soon quit a heated atmosphere, and seek one which is quite fresh and out of doors, or in a large apartment where the vital fluid circulates freely. The country will be preferable to town, but if compelled to inhabit the latter, the choice is to be given to houses in public squares, wide streets or terraces. The whole body should be left in perfect freedom, and even at night little covering is to be used. The food should be light, and all flatulent and indigestible aliments are to be shunned. But too many asthmatic subjects have died from neglect of these rules. The sto-

mach, distended by such food, thrusts the diaphragm towards the chest, and the lungs can no longer act; suffocation becomes imminent. Rice pottage, gruel and sago, are very salutary; milk is no less so, except where fever exists, or where the attack has been occasioned by indigestion; in a word, the regimen of the old should be always nourishing and slightly tonic. The most proper drinks are water, and all cool and refreshing liquids. Towards the end of the attack, good wine and coffee are to be substituted for water, and a little tobacco may be smoked. Floyer, to whom we are indebted for a most excellent work on asthma, took a few cups of toast and water every evening, to the whole of which he added fifteen or twenty grains of nitre or sal ammoniac; the last of which is preferable for those who have weak stomachs. Glysters always relieve the sick, by clearing the large intestines, and assisting the lungs. As too constant exercise often in-

creases this disorder, it should be taken in great moderation, or indeed perfect quiet might be better, and the breathing will be much easier in consequence. Too much talking must not be indulged in, and the mind should be kept quiet.

But our principal attention should be directed to the prevention of this disease. Unhappily, there are many instances where the physician cannot point out any regular rules; the patient must draw on the resources of his own experience, which alone are qualified to afford him the best counsel. Some, for instance, are better in the country, whilst others prefer the town air. Some fear great heat, but more frequently the severe cold of Winter; and for such persons warm climates will be the best adapted. Another class, on the contrary, experience suffocation in any but a very fresh air, and there are some others, very few in number, who find no relief but near a large fire. Heberden mentions some

of this latter order. These peculiarities are closely connected with the nature of the asthma, or of the causes which produce it. In fact, when the attack is spasmodic, north winds, dry or sea air, torment and weary the invalid, and induce violent suffocations. We see Swiss, of an asthmatic habit, who dwell in a high mountainous country, pass into Holland to relieve their breathing. If such emigrations are impossible, the floors of the apartments should be strewed with branches of willow steeped in water; the air of plains, deep vallies, stalls, stables, and large cities, where the air is thicker, moister, and exhales but little oxygen, excites spasm of the lungs in a much less degree. Cœlius Aurelianus advised frequent sea voyages; and Baglivi mentions having received the greatest benefit from them.

The humoral asthma requires quite an opposite mode of treatment. The person subject to it should live in large well-aired

rooms, exposed to the north wind, provided it does not blow too powerfully, in which case the suffocation would be but more acute. Country air also will procure a degree of ease, which is not to be found in cities. Damp dwellings and marshy countries, fogs, and sudden changes of atmosphere, are equally carefully to be avoided. The more vital gas the air contains, the more relief it affords to the asthmatic. Thornton mentions having cured twelve out of twenty-two of these invalids, and greatly relieved nine others of them by the inhalation of oxygen gas alone. Baglivi recommends also frequent country walks, especially in the neighbourhood of cultivated land. " My intention," he says, " is that the asthmatic should follow the labourers as they work, walking after them in the furrow which they have just traced with the plough; keeping the mouth open to inhale the vapours of the fresh-raised

clods of earth. This strengthens the lungs greatly."

The different gases which sometimes corrupt the purity of air are, on the other hand, very pernicious. For instance, we experience unpleasant sensations from smoke, bad smells, fetid vapours, tobacco smoke, a candle badly extinguished, melted grease, and the different kinds of dust which circulate incessantly in the air, and are agitated by the winds. The various kinds of miasmata, deleterious gases, known in chemistry by the names of carbonic acid gas, carbonated hydrogen, sulphurated hydrogen, sulphureous acid, and hydro-chloric acid, have the same results. Bonnet cites the example of an asthmatic person, who was violently attacked on going for a moment into a cellar, where the wine was in a state of fermentation.

Very powerful heat is no less prejudicial, and for this reason we see many more persons violently attacked in the Summer

than in Winter. Too strong a fire, and too close situations, are very injurious. Tight clothing, too warm covering, any pressure on the neck, chest, or belly, are to be avoided. The bed curtains should always remain open. Well stuffed pillows should elevate the head, which is not to be too warmly clad. Friction, though sometimes of use, with other individuals induces asthma, and to be efficacious it should always be gentle.

The stomachs of the asthmatic are generally irregular, their strength and energy much diminished, and thence often arise accidents still more fatal to these invalids. All substances which irritate, or tend to distend this important organ, for instance, greasy, crude, or windy food, are highly injurious, and should be abstained from. Hippocrates, indeed, forbids asthmatic patients the use of garlic, &c.; pork, beef, mutton, all kinds of salad, cabbage, turnips, fruit, pastry, cream and cheese. The supper

should be slight, and never composed of meat. It is always to be observed, that the soberer persons troubled with asthma are, the longer are their intervals, and the easier their respiration. Warm drinks are always dangerous, as are also strong liquors, brandy, or draughts taken between meals. Toast and water, small beer, gruel, and occasionally a cup of some bitter decoction, such as calumba, bark or gentian, are much preferable, as they are all highly useful in restoring the tone of the stomach. Heberden took a small spoonful of mustard seed every morning. Floyer took an emetic every month, and from time to time a few cups of some bitter infusion. The bowels should be kept open by gentle glysters. Too much sleep should not be indulged in, inasmuch as it enervates the whole system, more especially the digestive organs, and gives a greater tendency to returns of the disorder. On the other hand, exercise on horseback, or in a carriage, or any which

gives good motion to the arms; for instance, the dumb bells, playing bowls, rowing, &c. are deserving of the strongest commendation. Reading aloud must not be indulged in, and the mind should be kept as calm as possible; even study itself, however pleasing, must not be followed to any excess.

ON FLATULENCE.

Many old persons still preserve their digestive faculties in great force and vigour, to which alone and their care of themselves they are indebted for the long career of life they have run. Indeed, every one whose stomach becomes debilitated at an early age, speedily experiences suffering and pain, which bring him to a premature end. Flatulence is one of the most common symptoms of the weakness of this organ. In every stage of life, this import-

ant part contains a certain quantity of æriform fluid, necessary to its functions, and either taken by means of deglutition, or produced from the surface of the stomach itself by a kind of exhalation. Carbonic acid, azote and hydrogen gas, enter into its composition. When it accumulates, its rejection, as essential as that of the fæces and urine, becomes necessary. A total expulsion, however, of these gases is by no means indispensible to the regularity of digestion. When existing in moderation in the stomach and bowels, they excite the action of both in a useful degree. Indeed M. Magendie, in a Memoir read at the French Institute, cites the case of a medical man, whose digestion was habitually bad, flatulent, and troubled with acidity, who found relief only by swallowing, at different gulps, five or six mouthfuls of air, which he afterwards rejected by eructation *. But these are not the ordi-

* Memoire sur la déglutition de l'air atmospherique.

nary results; more frequently these gases cause much injury by their abundance, and the facility of their reproduction. Many old persons are grievously tormented by them, but in particular the very feeble; those annoyed by piles; the gouty; the very intemperate; those who *bolt,* or do not sufficiently masticate their food; persons of a very sedentary habit, or much afflicted in mind; indeed hippish persons suffer more from flatulence than any other class. To remedy this very unpleasant affection, the invalid, if he be an inhabitant of a damp, foggy or rainy country, should lose no time in seeking a change of climate. The southern provinces of France will afford him a warmth, and atmosphere peculiarly conducive to his cure. If circumstances prevent his travelling, the healthiest and most airy part of the city in which he is placed should be chosen. The highest rooms, with an eastern or southern aspect are preferable. The clothing should be

warm; but above all, about the pit of the stomach and feet; to keep them so, the belly should be rubbed, every morning and evening, with very warm linen or flannel, or with a flesh brush. When the old person is feeble, strengthening baths may be used with good effect; if he be of a strong habit, and not so far advanced in life, the cold bath will be equally useful. A celebrated physician has recommended the application of bags of aromatic powders to the pit of the stomach, or the crumb of fresh bread steeped in Spanish wine is still better.

Much attention should be given to the thorough mastication of the food, which should never be taken in excess. Too close grained meats, fat, or very warm food, pies, ragoûts, hard or farinaceous vegetables, are to be abstained from, as highly inducive of these flatulencies. Too indiscriminate a use of wines, or more particularly of liqueurs, are also very productive of

these gases; too much bread should not be eaten; it injures weak and windy stomachs materially. The food should be confined to white meats, roasted; pot herbs, river fish, slightly seasoned with salt and pepper, if the stomach be not too irritable; wines of a tonic quality, and containing but little spirit; for instance, Bourdeaux, are preferable; a little Spanish wine, too, may be drank occasionally after meals; but all acid or adulterated wines, or those which have fermented but little, cider and perry, are most injurious. A glass of very cold water in the morning has been found very beneficial to some. The bowels should be kept free. This ought to be strictly attended to, as most flatulent persons are of a costive habit, which must tend additionally to destroy the radical strength of the digestive organs. Too much sleep will only add to this inconvenience, and therefore should not be allowed. A sedentary life is to be abandoned for exercise in a

carriage or on horseback, the latter tends greatly to enliven the appetite when taken before meals; and billiards, rackets, bowls, nine-pins, and reading aloud, are very useful in imparting activity to every part of the frame.

When inclined to lowness of spirits and unpleasant thoughts, recourse should be had to gay and animated conversation. Peppermint water, with a little sugar, will afford also a great relief. Venice treacle has been highly praised for its good effects in cases of flatulence. Borden, indeed, says, "this precious medicine is adapted to every constitution; it cheers nature, and re-establishes it in every case of languor, weakness, and melancholy."

ON VOIDING OF BLOOD, OR HEMATURIA.

Old persons frequently pass blood with their urine, and their fright at such a symptom induces them, in many cases, to fly for relief to the most improper remedies. Indeed this evacuation is, oftentimes, not only harmless but even useful; for instance, to persons of a very sanguine habit, or subject to irregular attacks of piles. Daily observation has proved, that with them astringents, or any very sudden remedy, give rise to numerous bad effects; to various nervous spasms, dropsy, ulceration of the kidneys, phthisis, apoplexy, &c. It is highly important to be acquainted with the causes of this affection, in order either to avoid them or diminish their violence, if they already exist. Intemperance at table, too constant use of acid white wines; too many drinks; a sedentary life; too much sleep; very hard riding; hunting

over a hilly country; all violent exercise; riding in vehicles without springs; the use of medicines containing aloes; applying acrid substances to excite the evacuation of the urine, or to *cantharides* to overcome an unhappy impotence, are the many causes of this malady, and often bring it on again, when it has once shewn itself. When the blood runs from any of these numerous causes, and the kidneys are its source, the invalid seldom experiences any pain in the loins, and if anxieties and anguish do exist, they are rather in consequence of his fears than of the malady itself.

This affection being generally fostered in old persons by the debility of their constitutions and organs, their first care should be to banish all the causes which produce this weakness, and to seek out every means possible to restore them to their original strength. To gain this end, a good regimen will be the most preferable method. Any thing which may irritate the kidneys

and bladder is to be avoided. A pure air is to be sought, such as that of elevated situations, and damp rooms should always be shunned. The clothing ought to be warm, not confining the abdomen. The covering at night should be moderate, and a feather bed ought not to be used. The invalid should not lie at all on the back, or but little. Friction of the body, kidneys and spine, will have a very good effect. When the evacuation of blood is too abundant or frequent, the feet may be placed in a little cold water, or bandages moistened with it applied to the belly and thighs, or between the scrotum and anus. The food should be composed of analeptic and restoring diet, roast meats and their juices, and meat soup. The invalid should abstain from indigestible and hard meats, beer, and white wines. Much benefit, on the other hand, will be found from old Bourdeaux and port; from Malaga, Sherry, &c.; from cool acid drinks, and from the use of fer-

ruginous mineral waters. The bowels are to be kept open, and gentle and regular exercise taken. A foot pace on horseback may be used. Gentle emotions of the mind, and moderate gaiety, may be indulged in with advantage.

A very different course must be adopted when the blood proceeds from gravel, or calculus in the kidneys, which lacerate its coats in a greater or less degree. In this case more or less pain will almost always be felt in the loins, pointing out to the invalid the cause of this evacuation of blood.

The bath is of the first importance in this form of disease, in particular when composed of emollient substances; by moistening and softening the parts, they relieve the pain as if by enchantment. They may be often repeated, which gives them a preference over common baths, as these latter often weaken too much. The food should be soft, moistening, and refreshing, composed of white meats; rather acid and

emollient vegetables, and very ripe fruits. Dark coloured meats, game, pies, all high-flavoured foods, even asparagus, and any thing spicy, are highly injurious.

Emollient drinks, which increase the flow of the urine, pure water, barley water, linseed and *pellitory* teas, plain or diluted milk, are very useful; and I should entirely forbid wine, spirituous liquors and coffee. Very advanced age, a very debilitated constitution, or a bad stomach, are the only exceptions to this rule. In this branch of the disorder, as well as in the preceding, the bowels may be relieved by gentle glysters, which should be retained as long as possible.

If sitting up too late, and taking too much sleep, increase the malady, rest, on the contrary, is very advisable, whether in bed or in a large arm chair, which supports the loins well, without heating them. Exercise should be taken in moderation, and on a level road. Active employments

should be given up, and every passion which tends to increase the general susceptibility, should be kept within proper restraint.

ON GRAVEL AND STONE IN THE KIDNEYS AND BLADDER.

Nature endowed man, as well as every other animal, with a particular series of organs, charged with the rejection of the elements of the daily decomposition of their bodies, together with that portion of their food and drink which is not animalized. The kidneys are two of the most powerful of these emunctories; charged with the secretion of the urine, they discharge it into a series of channels, which propel by an action peculiar to them. This animal liquid, containing few substances in youth, becomes loaded with them in old age. Many of them secrete much mucilage, an

acid called uric, and essentially animal, and several earthy salts, namely oxalate of lime, ammoniaco-magnesian phosphate, urate of ammonia, &c. &c. These different salts, by precipitation and mixture with the mucous matter, form the different deposits, sand, gravel, and calculi, which form in the urinary ducts.

These maladies, which are often hereditary, are more peculiarly to be found in hard drinkers, voluptuaries, and gouty people. Indulgence in too much rest or sleep, sedentary life, too great sexual intercourse, violent exercises, indigestible and flatulent food, strong acid wines, and violent passions, are so many causes which cannot be too carefully avoided, when any symptoms of such diseases appear. We also observe a quantity of gravel in the urine of those troubled with obstructions of the abdomen, and their copious deposit is, in most instances, very useful, as preventing the formation of large urinary calculi.

The existence of these bodies is *almost always* to be known by peculiar symptoms. For instance, the passage of urine is often irregular; the liquid itself viscous, ropy, red, and of an unusually fetid smell. When the kidneys are the seat of disease, a fixed pain is felt in the loins; as also a painful retraction of the testicle, numbness in the thighs, continued nausea, vomitings, &c. When stone exists in the bladder, particular symptoms indicate its presence, and the skilful physician is seldom deceived on this head.

Two questions may be asked, namely, whether gravel and small stones of the kidneys and bladder can be easily expelled? And whether any means of dissolving them internally exist? The replies of the real medical world hereto will afford but little satisfaction. Impudent quacks, in every age, have abused public credulity on this point, ever pretending that they possessed infallible means of effecting this solution;

while the true physicians alone confess their ignorance on this head, and declare with Montaigne, "None but fools can suffer themselves to be persuaded, that the hard and solid mass which is formed in the kidneys can be dissolved by draughts or potions,"

What then is to be said of the remedies prescribed by the most celebrated men, on the properties of *persicaria*, so much boasted by Bayle and Baglivi; of *uva ursi*, by de Haen; on the urine of the wild boar and his bladder, recommended to be eaten; on the kidneys of the ass, hare, and goat's dung, prescribed by Pliny the naturalist. We must pity such follies and errors.

Some peculiar substances have, however, of late years attracted the attention of practitioners. By their aid, considerable hopes may be entertained of relieving many, and even curing a certain number of these invalids. For instance, many justly celebrated medical men have found gaseous

alkaline waters very useful. They often speedily allay pain, when administered mixed with milk. The dose is from three to four glasses, with an interval of two hours between each. They are particularly suited to cases where the gravel or calculi are composed of the phosphate of lime. Mascagni, of Florence; Stiprian Luiscius, professor at Delft; Brande, Home, and Hatchett, of the Royal Society of London; and Guyton Morveau, in France, have discovered, by experiments, that a fluid, containing liquid carbonate of potash (in the proportion of ten drops to a pint of linseed tea), prevented or destroyed gravel in the bladder, and this is the result when these calculi are composed of uric acid, or urate of ammonia. Unfortunately, the physician cannot tell, à priori, the nature of these stones, and he is forced to trials which have not always the success anticipated. It will be therefore from a prudent regimen that the invalid is to expect the greatest

relief, and to this alone all his hopes and attention should be directed. Baths maintain the first place on this point. The hip-bath only should be used where the patient is too old or exhausted. The strictest temperance must be observed, and excess no longer permitted; but above all, in the rich wines which lay the foundation of the most painful irritation. A softening and relaxing regimen, particularly a vegetable one, is the most suitable, as it more certainly diminishes the proportion of uric acid in the water, which is the chief element of calculi; little or no meat should be eaten.

The food of persons attacked by gravel should consist of soft, tender, fresh vegetables, roots plainly cooked, spinach, beet, turnips, cauliflowers, endive, sorrel, lettuce, dandelion, and ripe melting fruits; namely, strawberries, melons, cucumbers, pompions, mulberries, raspberries, gooseberries, oranges, cherries, pears, dates, grapes, figs,

peaches, &c.; honey, preserves, farinaceous food, porridge of bread, rice, pearl barley, or maize made with water; very clear rich broth, vegetable or animal jellies, fresh fish, eggs, milk, and the white meat of young animals.

Certain drinks will also be refreshing; for instance, decoctions of linseed, barley, and couch-grass, or small beer. Boerhaave mentions the good effects of a quantity of hot water. I should, however, not be inclined to agree with Baglivi, who praises both tea and coffee, as two certain remedies for the gouty and calculous. Milk and water are very preferable. Emollient glysters are very necessary.

If exercise be practicable, it should be light and regular. If suppression of urine should seize the patient; if he is weak and obliged to keep his bed, he should be warmly clad, and occasionally should be made to walk about his room for a short time, with help, as Sydenham recommends.

The person affected, by this means frequently voids a great quantity of urine. If any inclination is felt to make water during the night, he should get out of bed, if possible, to discharge this function, leaning forward to eject as much as possible. Sometimes, by retaining the urine a certain time, and rejecting it in a more increased body, the calculus itself will pass, should it happen to be small. Under such circumstances, exercise on horseback, and every other violent one, should be given up.

Some experiments made by M. Magendie, and communicated to the French Institute, lead us to hope, that by the help of a peculiar regimen, we may one day be enabled even to dissolve the gravel and calculi of the kidneys and bladder, of which uric acid is the principal component. It has long been known, that a pure and solely vegetable diet greatly diminishes the quantity of this acid. Guided by this knowledge, this gentleman, as modest as skil-

ful, took every pains to ascertain, by repeated experiments on dogs, whether, by feeding them only with substances which did not contain a particle of azote, (one of the most abundant principles of urea, the basis of uric acid,) any of this same acid would still be found in their urine. He, therefore, composed their diet of oil, butter, gum, sugar, and honey, on which the dogs, of whom he made the trial, lived thirty or forty days*.

From the very first day of these experiments, the urine of these animals was destitute of uric acid. In comparing these results with the method proposed for the cure of gravel and calculi, it seems very possible to diminish, in a great degree, the formation of uric acid in the kidneys, to prevent or check in their development the calculi to which this acid gives rise.

Those suffering from gravel should re-

* On inspection of these animals after death, they always exhibited ulcerations of the cornea, a symptom as singular as difficult to be accounted for.

ject from their food all articles, not excepting bread itself, or vegetables, which contain azote; such as alliaceous plants, mustard, cress, cabbage, the farinacea, onions, &c.; sugar, butter, and honey, should always be ingredients in the food made use of, to which may be added sweet or acid fruits or preserves.

CATARRH OF THE BLADDER, AND INCONTINENCE OF URINE.

If most chronic maladies of the aged terminate with life only, as Hippocrates has declared, it is to maladies of the kidneys and bladder that this truth more immediately applies.

Catarrh, or cold in the bladder, is one amongst this melancholy catalogue. The pains it causes, and the numerous ropy, thready, and thick humours that the urine,

in such cases, contains, are the most evident proofs of its presence. If a calculus in many cases gives rise to this disorder, it is no less common in individuals tormented with piles, who lead too sedentary a life, or whose minds, greatly occupied, are given up to too constant employment. It is also frequently a result of retrocedent gout, of rheumatism fixed on the bladder, or acrid medicines taken internally.

This disorder, unfortunately, is far beyond the reach of medicine; the remedies applied are most commonly ineffectual; and if some cures can be instanced, they are solely due to the study of the art of preserving health. Dry and elevated situations should be chosen, and damp ones, which might increase or perpetuate this disorder, avoided with care. The invalid should be kept moderately warm, which may be effected, in Winter, by a good fire, warm clothing, swanskin, flannel, or good

socks. The feet and legs should be guarded from cold by woollen stockings. Tepid baths of plain water are only efficacious when the malady once becomes developed. At a later period they weaken the invalid, and increase the affection. In this case the aged may substitute for them aromatic baths, or those composed with soap or wine.

When the malady is of long standing, hard and dry rubbing of the spine and belly, together with the vapours of juniper, thyme or lavender, thrown on the coals, are of undoubted service. Nor can I bestow too many commendations on exercise, or different sports, which, putting every member in gentle play, enliven and relieve them from the torpor incident to many old persons, and give the vital powers stronger means of resistance to disease.

All the food of this class of invalids should be strengthening and tonic. I would advise the use of good broths or soup,

made of beef, mutton, or old poultry, to which aromatic or tonic plants should be added; sago, prepared with water or milk, chocolate, prepared with vanilla, pure coffee, or *café au lait,* asparagus, artichokes, celery, garlic, and onions. Linneus notices a case where the last mentioned article, long persevered in, wrought a cure. Cress is equally good. Roast and grilled meat should be eaten rather than boiled, and the preference is due to beef and mutton. Either should be slightly seasoned with aromatic herbs; nor should eggs or sugar be forgotten. Under the head of drinks, I should choose the more tonic wines, as Bourdeaux or Sherry.

INCONTINENCE OF URINE.

This disorder, as well as catarrh of the bladder, is seldom curable in old persons. It is, in most cases, to be attributed to weakness of the sphincter of the bladder, which

can no longer retain the urine, and to paralysis of that organ itself.

Those old persons, however, who still preserve some remains of strength may expect some alleviation of this annoyance, by following the plans laid down for the cure of the last mentioned malady. Friction of the belly and thighs, ice applied to the perinæum, composing glysters, and a decoction of aromatic plants, sugar, and a little wine, have frequently relieved those afflicted. But to arrive at this happy result, to use the words of La Fontaine, " perseverance, patience, and length of time," are highly necessary.

Different instruments have been resorted to, which, by compressing the penis, hinder the urine from flowing; but few can support their inconvenience, and they may, besides, increase the palsy of the bladder. There are also vessels made of leather, or purses of gummed or impenetrable taffety, of a very close texture, in which a sponge

is placed. These are fastened to the pelvis, and the urine flows without incommoding the invalid.

RETENTION OF URINE.

This is equally common amongst the aged. To prevent it, they cannot make water too often. Their bladder, become sluggish, may, by a slightly forced distention, lose all its powers, and be no longer capable of expelling the urine, and thus lay the foundation of attacks, too often fatal in their termination. The retention of any of the natural discharges should be particularly guarded against, both by the young and the old, male and female. Years of misery and suffering have too frequently followed a foolish bashfulness in this particular—and in some instances the loss of life.

ON IMPOTENCE.

Montaigne stands so high in the philosophical world, that the old who prize health as the first and best of blessings, will do well in attending to his maxim, that, " *toutes choses ont leur saison les bonnes et tout.*" It will always remind them, that every age has its own particular enjoyments, pleasures, and pains; and that, arrived at old age, they should no longer bind their brows with myrtle, the attribute of youth. Love is no longer adapted to their period of life; and the sacrifices which they pretend to offer at its altars often prepare only their shame, different diseases, and sometimes death itself. Yet, why do we find many who so far forget themselves, as to seek and even solicit preparations to repair the ravages of time, and more frequently of their disgusting debaucheries? Can they forget that their

hopes are vain, and that all the powers of medicine, or all the drugs of the Pharmacopœia, can never effectually combat the inscrutable laws of Nature?

Most of my readers, doubtless, are aware, that in the time of the Marshal de Richelieu, too celebrated in France for his gallantries, it was the custom in Paris to distribute lozenges, in which powder of cantharides was the principal ingredient, and an abuse of which produced the most frightful effects in some cases. Amongst the numerous instances which exist, I am only puzzled which to select. Henricus Abheers cites the case of an old man, who swallowed a quantity of cantharides in syrup, to reanimate his virile powers. In the night he was seized with unpleasant ticklings, and a violent itching of the penis. The next morning he passed blood, for the urine ceased to flow, and without prompt medical relief, he must have sunk under it. Cabrol, an eminent

surgeon, who flourished a few centuries since, relates the end of an unfortunate Provençal, who, having taken a powerful aphrodisiac, was attacked with violent erection, inflammation and mortification of the virile member, and died in consequence. This is the fate which all who have recourse to the different preparations of cantharides may expect.

Opium and saffron are not less injurious, and ridicule must be the lot of those weak beings who put their faith in any medicine whatever, with a view to restore the lost energies of nature. It may exhaust the remains of sensibility, which is the principle of the tonic powers, and the source of life and energy, but cannot bring back the vigour of youth to a body worn out either by age or excess.

There are more plausible means of restoring these powers. If the principle of life be not entirely worn out by too advanced age, or past excess of debauchery, in-

temperance or lasciviousness, good succulent food, chocolate, and old wine, taken with prudence, are stimulants of the organs of reproduction, as active as innocent. First, we may rank roast meats, especially beef and mutton, and even pork, for those who have good stomachs; also different fish, ray in particular, which both Paw and Montesquieu declare have a very stimulant effect on the skin and virile members. Shell fish, lobsters, truffles, and mushrooms, may likewise be added to this list. We are also aware that garlic, onions and leeks, possess the same qualities in a great degree; and Martial has sung their praises in the two following lines :—

"Qui præstare virum cypriæ certamine nescit,
Manducat bulbos, et bene fortis erit."

Exercise, employment and friction, will assist the strength greatly, and also the complete development of all the vital powers.

OF PILES.

This malady is disagreeable, both from its situation, its acute smarting, its pains, and its numerous concomitant inconveniences. It frequently takes its rise in the vices and excesses of social life. Villagers, whose lives are temperate, their rest and exercise regular, their passions calm, and employment active, are seldom or never troubled with these attacks. Let us look, on the other hand, to the inhabitant of a rich city, observe his habits, and we must soon perceive him doing every thing which can increase or give a tendency to piles. For instance, they are frequently caused by the deleterious emanations of privies, when persons give themselves the habit of remaining there too long; by too great a use of succulent food, excess of good cheer; indigestible substances, which offer too much resistance to the gastric juices to

undergo due elaboration. Cherry or plum stones, swallowed voluntarily, or from inadvertence, produce the like effect; as do pickles, spices, abuse of spirituous and heating liquors, fiery wines, tea and coffee. We also frequently see piles occasioned by numerous glysters taken too warm, or a constipated habit; by too sudden transition from an active to a sedentary life; idleness, indolence, too long sleep, too hard walking or riding, particularly on a rough trotting horse; too great excitement of mind, lively passions, in particular anger or grief. Thus it is usual to see men of letters and study attacked by this malady, because, in their case, induration of the fæces is very frequent, and their buttocks are also constantly compressed, irritated, or heated by the seat they rest on. The frequent use many old persons make of rhubarb, to correct their digestion, is often also the cause of piles. Indeed this medicine is always injurious to those affected by this ma-

lady. Hæmorrhoidal swellings and bloody flux, which sometimes accompanies them, are two differences which should be well understood, before any person attempt their cure, without compromising the life of the patient.

In the first case, these attacks generally seize persons of a more or less sanguine habit. Their duration is then somewhat limited, and the itching pain and heat they occasion, the pains in the kidneys and colics, are always more or less severe. They are then, to use a medical phrase, "acute," and any sudden suppression of them may be most dangerous. In the second, the piles are passive, and seldom or never accompanied by any of the above mentioned symptoms. The person attacked by them is feeble, full of humours; his flesh soft and flabby; his blood is pale, and its course may be suppressed without apprehension of danger.

When acute, habitual, and not affecting

the strength, if the health ever appears better during their presence, they should not be suppressed. By this course, fevers, consumption, quinsy, rheumatic gout, erysipelas, ringworms, asthma, scirrhus, and many other affections may be prevented. When the emission of blood accompanying these active piles becomes excessive, we should no longer remain quiet spectators, but take some steps, as excess must be bad in every thing. "*In medio stat virtus.*" But I will first state the regimen proper for the person labouring under this affection.

He must, in the first place, discontinue too heating, stimulatory, or highly spiced or seasoned food, which irritate all the organs, and cause dangerous costiveness. He should eat rye bread, white meats, pot herbs, and acid fruits. He should avoid all heating liquors, tea and coffee. Wine, if at all, must be taken most sparingly, and pure water, barley water, or lemonade, are preferable. Weak, pale individuals alone,

whose bloody flux is very profuse, may be allowed the use of generous wines, nourishing and slightly seasoned food.

It is not less important to avoid, as much as possible, sitting too long; the anus becoming too much excited by the consequent pressure. They should, therefore, rise at intervals, if possible, and walk a few paces, to aid the general circulation, more particularly that of the belly. Soft woollen sofas, cushions stuffed with feathers, or arm-chairs filled with horse hair, should not be used, as they foment the heat of the anus, and occasion a greater afflux of the humours towards this region. Chairs, too protuberant in the middle, are equally unsuitable. They should use one pierced in the centre, that the fundament may not be cramped, unless the preference should be given to a stool, covered with sheep-skin, which may be placed wherever they please. To persons of this class, walking is as beneficial as a sedentary life

is injurious. Taken in moderation, it aids the free exercise of every function, gives activity to the circulation of the belly, never regular with these patients; and all the organs recover from the torpor incident to a sedentary habit. Exercise also facilitates the expulsion of the fæces, and prevents costiveness. It is also excellent in diverting the mind. If any other disorder forces them to inactivity, they ought to render it as little inconvenient as possible, by often changing the position, moving from one side to the other. They should go out in a carriage, boat, or sedan chair. Riding is generally injurious, but more particularly when the swellings are painful, or threaten to become so. The agitation of a trot or gallop is too great; the rubbing or shaking of the podex too acute, and often the cause of frightful bloody fluxes, or inflammation of the tumours of the anus. Yet it may, in some cases, be safely indulged in; for instance,

when weak, or suffering from suppression of bloody flux. The buoyancy it imparts, and gentle and regular shocks it gives to the system of the vessels, are frequently very efficacious.

If a certain degree of zeal is highly advisable in mental employments, and certain scientific studies, it is, on the other hand, occasionally very injurious to give ourselves up to them without order or regularity. The scientific and studious are only subject to piles, because the habitual tension of the brain checks, in some degree, its favourable influence over the other organs, and from the bad habit they imbibe of remaining almost constantly seated, and leaning forward.

Powerful passions of the mind are no less injurious. No one can be a stranger to the various disorders produced by fear, terror, constant melancholy, and frequent fits of passion. The death of many persons troubled with piles, who had not reso-

lution to moderate their violence, sufficiently attests their danger. In cases of obstinate costiveness, glysters should be repeatedly administered; prune water, whey, or lemonade, should be drank; and very ripe cherries, plums, apricots, grapes, and gooseberries, may be eaten. When this regimen has been strictly pursued, and cure of piles has been the happy result, glysters of cold water should be resorted to, to prevent any relapse. If these cannot be borne, cold hip-baths may be substituted. Common cold washing of the anus, daily repeated, may produce a like effect.

Baths in general, and tepid baths, in particular, are no less useful for strong persons when their piles are very painful, and may be persevered in until they feel a little weakened. Vapour or sitting baths, of rather high temperature, may also be added. When too hot, they might cause determination of blood to the head or breast.

From this cause, we often see persons suddenly seized with apoplexy, after using too warm a vapour bath. When piles become too suddenly suppressed, and indisposition is the consequence, tepid baths, or the *pediluvium,* may be used; taking care that the water does not rise higher than the ankles. To the latter may be added some salt or flour of mustard. Slight and often repeated friction of the anus is beneficial. An application of leeches will also be found of the utmost service, both in allaying the pain, and abating inflammation.

On the other hand, when bloody flux is excessive, or threatens very great weakness, there are remedies which may occasionally be applied with success. The patient should first of all be kept quiet in body and mind, and lie horizontally on a hard bed. Feather beds or mattrasses, the wool of which has been just carded, irritate the seat of the disease, and increase the flux. A mattrass, with but little stuffing,

ought to be used, under which should be placed a palliasse, which is not to be shaken. The feet should be raised a little higher than the head. The air of the room should be often renewed; the drink acid and cool, and friction of the whole surface of the body resorted to. When the invalid is very weak, his skin pale, his flesh flabby, he should drink the oldest and most stomachic wines. The food must be nourishing, substantial, and slightly seasoned. Each repast should be light, to prevent indigestion, which might cause a relapse. In a word, this disorder is often so serious that prudence dictates to us not to rely on our own strength. In such a case the presence of the physician is indispensible.

EXCESSIVE FAT, SWELLING AND VARICES OF THE LEGS, CURVATURE OF THE SPINE, PIMPLY ERUPTION OF THE SKIN, &c.

Emaciation is much more frequent than *em-bon-point* in the decline of life. The cellular texture, which unites all the parts, contracts; the cells are no longer imbued with serous and greasy liquids; sinking and dryness are every where apparent. The very contrary, sometimes however, appears in old persons, women especially; whose organs seem, as it were, stifled under the weight of enormous masses of fat. The life of such subjects is every moment in danger; and it is by no means uncommon to see numbers of them die suddenly*. This indisposition, always very inconvenient, is the effect of a peculiar injury of the

* The ancients attached a kind of shame to excessive corpulency; and in Sparta, where the laws were very severe, it was absolutely forbidden to become fatter than was suitable to bodily exercise.

vital properties of the cellular and lymphatic systems; it is a sort of fat dropsy. Age may be one of its primary causes; but a violation of the rules of a prudent regimen, still more certainly conduces to this affection. We must be aware, indeed, that excessive fat is, as it were, the particular inheritance of great eaters; of those addicted to wine; nor is it less common to those who pass their lives in shameful indolence; great sleepers; the idle of every class; those wretched beings who do not exercise the faculties of the mind, and who, destitute of physical and moral sensibility, experience none of those painful struggles of the mind or ardent passions, that wither and suspend all the nutritive motions. Persons inclined to fat should avoid every thing conducive to it in good time, but especially low, damp, dark and warm situations.

In India the females, destined for persons of rank, are brought to a proper pitch

of plumpness, by keeping them shut up for a time in close dark situations; inhabitants of marshy countries, those of Phasis for instance, mentioned by Hippocrates, were always more corpulent than others. Mountainous situations, and lofty houses, should be sought. Smart rough friction of the whole skin should be daily applied. Tepid baths should only be employed for the purposes of cleanliness, and care ought to be taken not to remain in them too long. Cold baths are much more healthy, and will disagree with none but those of a very sanguine habit, or habitually subject to piles. Stoves and hot baths are not to be neglected, as they excite copious perspirations, and reduce the frame. Hippocrates advises corpulent persons to work a great deal fasting, and to take their meals before rest, and immediately after labour. Juicy meats, various kinds of fish, or farinaceous food, are very unfit for them. They should confine themselves rather to pot herbs,

with a little seasoning, dry meats, pigeons, game, and lean pork. Wine should be taken but moderately, and white is to be preferred. Coffee, I would recommend, but not chocolate or tea. Slightly acid drinks and lemonade will be found of great service. With respect to pure vinegar, considered by so many as a specific, it is of consequence only from its dangerous effects. Haller mentions the case of a man who, after drinking it for more than a year, from corpulency fell into the most complete atrophy, and died in a short time of scirrhus in the stomach. Innumerable examples might be cited on this head. Tobacco should be smoked and chewed to assist the salivary secretion. If its taste be repugnant, the roots of pyrethrum, or angelica, or mustard-seed, may be substituted.

Nor can I too strongly advise these persons to renounce habits of indolence, for deep meditation and abstruse studies, which

will divert the mind from its habitual torpor. Unhappily the voluptuousness and enervation of the present day agree but little with so active a mode of life. The corpulent are always great sleepers, which adds no little to this inconvenience. Sleep fattens by enervating the frame. Excessive waking is, therefore, preferable, when united with exercise, which produces perspiration. The hardest labour will be the most beneficial. Pain of mind, and some annoyances, will also assist its good effects. If it is imprudent to tempt them, still we ought not to suffer ourselves to be intimidated by them. They sometimes render life worthy of enjoyment, by strengthening the springs of the mind, developing the sensibility, in some degree blunted by the possession of too many comforts.

SWELLING OR ŒDEMA OF THE LEGS.

Several old persons are troubled with swelling of the legs and feet, which is either

permanent, or quits them at night to reappear on the following morning. This is the inevitable effect of relaxation or weakness of all the organic system, in particular the venous and lymphatic, which are intended to reconduct to the centre of circulation the animal liquids, deposited in the cellular tissue of the legs. Rheumatism, or gout of old standing, swollen veins, old cicatrized ulcers of the lower extremities, are often the original causes of this affection. It often also acts in conjunction with asthma or dropsy of the chest, which has begun but not yet shewn itself. In the two latter cases it may be beneficial, as it relieves the invalid whose respiration becomes easier, and its suppression would not be unattended with danger, especially if too suddenly brought about. Indeed, great caution is required in the use of astringents, or any other means of suppressing this swelling, in the cases of asthmatic or very corpulent people, great eaters,

hard drinkers, or individuals who have attained a very advanced age, &c. &c.

If particular circumstances imperiously demand a remedy for this affection; if it is only casual, or of too great a size, first of all low damp situations should be abandoned. The feet and legs must be kept warm, by hare or lamb skins, and other suitable coverings. They should be plunged, every morning, in tepid salt and water, or in an infusion of aromatic herbs. They should be then bathed, afterwards dried, and slightly bandaged with a wide roller, commencing by applying it to the point of the foot, and ending at the knee. Dry aromatic fumigations, directed to the parts, will be no less serviceable. Tonic white wine should be taken to excite secretion of urine. Moderate exercise will strengthen all the limbs; and during rest, the legs should repose on a horizontal plane.

SWELLING OF THE VEINS OF THE LEGS.

This affection is very usual in old age. A slight scratch, a blow on the varicose veins, may easily cause their rupture and ulceration. Too many precautions cannot be taken against these often incurable accidents. Woollen stockings are too rough and dry to be immediately applied. Thread hose, under others of a warmer nature, are more advisable. The leg ought first, however, to be kept compressed by a linen bandage, or stockings of dog's skin or fustian, made for the purpose. No compression can impede the course of the blood towards the knees and groins. Glysters should be used to clear the larger intestines and prevent costiveness, often the cause of this malady. The invalid should not remain standing longer than is absolutely necessary for the purposes of utility and exercise.

CURVATURE OF THE SPINE.

Many persons as they advance in years become bent, and it is often the source of numerous inconvenient or even dangerous maladies. Literary men, and those who, from the nature of their employment, are obliged to lean forward, are particularly liable to this indisposition, which is chiefly to be attributed to the habitual tension of the dorsal muscles; their increased elongation, the withering of the intervertebral fibres and cartilages, and the contraction of the anterior ligaments. It may, in a certain degree, be prevented or moderated, by occasional rubbing in of aromatic and spirituous infusions over the whole of the spine, as well as by the use of machines fitted to the body, which keep it upright, without galling the parts on which they press. Their shape, solidity, and construction, may be varied as occasion requires.

PIMPLY ERUPTIONS OF THE SKIN.

The skin of the old preserves none of its earlier characteristics. It becomes hard, dry, wrinkled, rough, and almost impenetrable. Thence arise annoying, and sometimes insupportable itchings, different eruptions, pustules, pimples and tetters, which frequently render it disgusting.

These results are caused by the little care most of this class pay to the skin, in seldom or never taking the bath, and totally neglecting friction. Many lead much too sedentary lives; seldom shifting themselves, or wearing woollen stuff only, which irritates the skin too much, when constantly covered with perspiration. Too many, likewise, use only acrid and too highly seasoned food, and spirituous liquors, which irritate the humours, and cause the skin, as well as every other organ, to imbibe the principles of irritation. These eruptions

may sometimes be remedied by choosing dry apartments, where fresh air is often admitted; by frequently changing the clothes, the linen in particular; by cleansing the body in tepid baths; regulating and stimulating the cutaneous functions by friction; choosing for food, sweet nutritious nourishment, instead of acrid substances; and by promoting the action of the bowels, and the passage of urine. Activity, gentle occasional exercise, and light employment, are to be preferred to a sedentary and indolent life.

DEAFNESS.

Many old people become suddenly deaf, and frequently from no other cause than the accumulation of the wax in the outer auditory duct. A little cleanliness would have prevented this. This kind of deafness may be subdued by the help of an ear-pick. When it exists, and mere inspection will make us acquainted with the cause, a

little oil may be introduced into that part of the ear, which may remain there some time to soften the wax; and this matter, which suspended the action of a most precious sense, can then be removed.

HYDROCELE.

Many aged persons have enormous aqueous collections in the scrotum, which they wish to have removed. Many of them are enabled to do so without inconvenience; but this is not the case with the feeble and those who are full of humours. Marc Antoine Petit mentions, that many have died from attacks of the chest and rheumatic gout, from having attempted the cure of hydrocele, in spite of all the counsels of prudence.

OF RHEUMATISM.

No disorder is more common than rheumatism; not that of the piercing feverish kind, more or less violent, and often dreadful in its results, but the weaker kind; those fixed, tenacious, vague, and constantly shifting attacks, which sometimes successively pervade every part. This, in the present day, is too often to be traced to the little attention to the primary physical education, and to the development of a strong, robust constitution. Ancient physicians speak of this disorder but seldom, for indeed by them it was little known; but they have perceived it less in their practice, because the institutions, mode of life and manners of ancient nations, were directly opposite to ours. Rheumatism attacks every rank, both sexes, different ages and professions; but above all others, the weak and old. It torments its victims

at all times, in all seasons, in the lap of quiet, as in the midst of every exercise. Of incredible mobility, it flies with the rapidity of lightning, from part to part; sometimes seizing the whole frame; disappearing without any visible cause, only to return with the same promptitude. If it abandons those members which it has been most accustomed to annoy, or the exterior muscles of the body, it is but to force itself into and concentrate its attacks, unknown to the invalid, in his internal organs; fixing itself there, and laying the foundation of serious and frequently fatal attacks. How many cancers, chronic inflammations of the stomach, womb, and intestines, may claim this as their origin? We should, therefore, strive incessantly to protect ourselves from so dreadful a malady, or combat it incessantly, if it should glide into our organs, and injure their functions.

Acute rheumatism is particularly tor-

menting to robust, sanguine, and corpulent persons. It is not so with chronic rheumatism, which, very obstinate and sometimes invincible, acts in preference on the feeble, those of a dry or tender constitution, and who are ever liable to a host of enervating maladies. It generally appears in Spring and Autumn. The air has a wonderful effect in its production. This fluid is not such an active cause of the affection, when very hot or very cold, as when in a middle degree of temperature. Thus, rheumatism is as rare under the frigid zone as under the equator. The seat of its empire is the temperate zone. It is peculiarly common in damp marshy countries, intersected by numerous canals, or exposed to almost constant fogs; for instance, Holland and England. The atmospheric humidity is evidently, therefore, its most active cause.

Passing from climates to private mansions, we must remark how pernicious is

the influence of the air impregnated with it. Is not rheumatism more frequent in the bottom of vallies, in houses lower than the ground, or lately built, in rooms containing aqueous vapour in considerable quantity, and often the consequence of sudden change from one air to another, of rapid successions of heat and cold, drought and moisture?

Sudden immersion of the body in cold water, remaining too long in it, exposure to rain, wearing wet clothes, sleeping on damp ground, warm clothing too soon left off, are some amongst the many causes of rheumatism. Suppression of perspiration, and some other natural evacuations, namely, setons, issues and blisters, may also give a tendency to it, which may also result from their superabundance. It is also greatly attributable to excessive sexual intercourse. Hoffman has remarked, that persons who have addicted themselves greatly to its enjoyment, before they had

arrived at the meridian of bodily strength, are seldom exempt from this malady during the remainder of their lives. Those who lead an active life, at the same time avoiding all causes inducive of rheumatic attacks, are generally free from them, while, on the other hand, so great a tendency to them does indolence offer, that it was, in former days, very uncommon to find the religious escape its ravages. There still remain professions, and especially the military, more susceptible of it than any others.

Sleep assists the action of external cold and damp greatly; consequently we see those who leave their windows open during the night, or who sleep on damp ground, very often attacked by rheumatism. Melancholy, enervating passions, but anger in particular, give also a great tendency to it. This is the series of the causes of rheumatism; by knowing which, we may guard against them. If we experience the influence of some one of them, and undergo

the pains of rheumatism, the art of preserving health may interpose its good offices, and often provide excellent modes of cure.

Heat is one of the agents most frequently put in requisition to obtain this end; either alone, or combined with water or aromatic vapours. To reap their good effects, the patient should be placed in a dry vapour bath, or wrap the parts affected well up in fur, ashes, or heated cloths. At other times he may apply a plate of metal, at a high temperature, near the seat of pain. In some cases, great benefit has been experienced from the application of a napkin, several times folded, on which a hot brick or iron has been placed; so that the heat, passing progressively through the linen, and increasing but gradually, the invalid can bear it to a higher degree.

Light appears to favour the action of heat; it is therefore highly incumbent on the rheumatic to expose themselves often

to the sun, to inhabit light situations, and even climates, where this luminary remains long above the horizon, and is felt in considerable power. Friction, before a bright blazing fire, will be found useful. Many of those affected have derived great benefit from heat, combined with aromatic vapours, or the immersion of the body or part affected in air charged with volatilized spirits of wine. The same commendations may be given to tepid and sweating baths. Bread hot from the oven, applied to the seat of pain, has effected numerous cures.

Rubbing and percussion, continued for some time, are not to be neglected. The former operates in a permanent manner, by the habitual application of certain stuffs to the integuments, flannel for instance, which keeps up a slight but constant friction. It is also sometimes affected by means of these stuffs, heated and imbued with resinous and balsamic vapours, or

steeped in spirituous and aromatic liquds, rubbed well over the skin; flesh brushes may also be used for the like purpose. Lastly, warm water may be poured on the part affected, which acts by its temperature and motion. Pouring sand, sufficiently heated, on the seat of pain, from a certain height, has been recommended, and beating with flexible rods, has sometimes produced favourable results. Electricity too, has sometimes been productive of relief. Some persons have experienced from it a complete cure; but a greater number have found no benefit whatever from its application.

This malady once subdued, flannel should be constantly worn; active exercise, both on foot and horseback, taken; and every thing debilitating carefully avoided.

I refer the reader to the following article on "Gout," for information, as to the kinds of regimen and exercise, &c. necessary.

OF GOUT.

This frequently severe malady attacks both adults and old persons. But it is in the latter stage of life, in particular, that it puts forth all its powers, and shews itself under the most extraordinary as well as painful shape. It does not always confine its attacks to the feet, but too often extends them to all the organs, and the structures which compose them; and fixing itself in the head, chest or stomach, appears under the various forms of vertigos, megrims, ophthalmia, apoplexy, asthma, nasal bleedings, spasms of the heart, pains in the stomach, kidneys and bladder, different nervous affections, hypochondria, violent cramps in the limbs, &c. &c.

What can produce a disease so agonizing and painful, and yet sometimes so useful, when the constitution, relaxed and enfeebled by dissipation, has rendered its

presence in some degree necessary? It is to the social vices, and to the various excesses to which men sacrifice their lives, that they owe the presence of this guest, at once so terrible and so salutary. Do we not, indeed, see gout exercising its fearful sway over those unfortunate beings, who find pleasure only in luxury, indolence, and good living; who exhaust their strength by an intemperate use of wine and spirits, and abandon themselves blindly to the most immoderate and dangerous passions? It has, therefore, been said with justice, that gout tormented the rich more than the poor, and men of letters, rather than the unlearned; that Bacchus was its father; Venus its mother; and anger, the midwife that ushered it into life.

But there are also other causes productive of or predisposing to gout. For instance, it is generally to be found in strong, plethoric, fat persons, whose heads are large, in melancholy temperaments, parti-

cularly the hypochondriac, who, from their peculiar habit, are more liable to disease than persons gifted with a more chearful temperament. It also attacks those who have bad digestion, live on gross, too highly salted, indigestible, or acid food; or the person who too suddenly abandons this regimen for a more severe one. It is equally prevalent amongst those of a sedentary habit, who give themselves too much up to study or business, devoting their nights to labour, or passing suddenly from this active life to a state of indolence, no less dangerous. Abuse of pleasures, lively and painful affections of the mind, suppression of transpiration, imprudent repulsion of cutaneous affections, sudden chill in the feet after perspiration, or exposing them to the fire when cold or wet, give a great tendency to gout in numerous cases. The greatest sobriety, the utmost temperance, are nevertheless not exempt from it; but in such cases gout is but a melancholy

heir loom, a painful legacy of relations, who frequently hand it down in this manner for several generations. It is, under these circumstances, more constitutional than in the preceding instances; it in a manner entwines itself in the inmost frame of the person affected, and no powers of medicine can eradicate it. To prevent its coming to a head, or mitigate its agonies, if it shews itself, are all that the strictest regimen and quietest life can effect.

Gout, when it even attacks the feet only, and whatever may be its causes, is not purely a local disease. The pains, swelling, and all the inflammatory symptoms which give evidence of its presence, are but the expression of a particular state, unknown in its nature, but extending throughout the organs. It is not an acid alkaline humour, a morbid viscosity, a chalky substance, which is its primary cause, or forms its essence; it appears to originate in a special alteration of the vital properties,

and a kind of failure of the tonic powers. With regard to the chalk stones often appearing on the joints, they are but a result of gout, and in nowise bearing any reference to its determination or production. The care of every person disposed to gout, or already attacked by it, should be particularly directed to prevent its rising to those primary sources which cherish or produce it, or when it has once made its appearance, to moderate its violence, regulate its attacks, or retard its development. This is often easy enough, if he will but make those sacrifices necessary to obtain so desirable an end. Reason and courage are the powerful weapons which will render us triumphant; but, on the other hand, timidity, inexperience, or intemperance, will render this victory impossible. In the age of strength the gout is often regular, and appears in the feet, at more or less distant periods, accompanied with a greater or less marked degree of swelling. When it

is of old standing, and developes itself in the old or feeble, it often affects these parts but slightly; in which case it torments the internal organs, constituting the varieties of gout, known by the names of "atonic, retrocedent, misplaced." These are more painful and even serious, and frequently produce death, either suddenly, or by the numerous affections of which they sow the seeds. Active treatment is here more rigorously necessary. Regular gout, on the contrary, is often a benefit of nature, and so useful that it cannot be opposed without danger. I will now speak of regular gout.

When some of its twinges have been already felt, reason dictates to the invalid to remain quiet under its pains. Too active an intervention might impede its development, increase or suppress it too promptly. It is only in the intervals between its attacks that medicine can successfully employ the methods which nature and art

place at its disposal; and to gain this important result, regimen is peculiarly serviceable. It alone, acting on the general animal system, properly modifies the state of the solids and fluids, eradicates their morbid constitution, and sometimes restores them to their primitive state. Local remedies, and all topical applications, on the contrary, are generally injurious. They act only upon the effects of an universal affection, and leave it sufficiently powerful, not only to disturb, but even totally to suspend the internal functions. It is, however, extremely difficult to obtain, by means of regimen, a perfect cure of this disorder, especially if of old standing or hereditary. More frequently the gouty patient must make up his mind to bear it all his life. In such a case, its development is often necessary, and if regular is conducive to a long career in life. Let those who labour under incurable gout arm themselves with courage and patience, it is the best means

of maintaining a defensive warfare with an invincible enemy; and Horace has wisely said—

> "Sed levius fit patientiâ
> Quidquid corrigere nefas."

By the word "regimen," the medical world does not understand only what concerns food or the hours of meals, but also every thing which constitutes the science of preserving health. Let all invalids observe for their health's sake the different thermometric, hygrometric, barometric, or electric states of the atmosphere, which have all, more or less, an influence on their frame. Cold air is always injurious, which is the reason they suffer more during Autumn, Winter, and Spring. Summer almost always relieves, and many feel no pain whatever during this delightful season. Warm climates are especially suited to the gouty. If their fortunes or particular interests do not allow their abandoning their own country, they should seek situations

with a southern aspect, or those which are very elevated, or of a very oxygenated air, carefully avoiding impetuous northerly winds, sudden changes from heat to cold, or cold to heat, which affect them most painfully. But these different precautions should be more rigorously observed when any attack of gout makes itself visible. On such an occasion, the seat of pain should be covered with flannel, swan, or rabbit skins, and warm clothing. It should be wrapped in preference, in green waxed taffety, if the inflammatory swelling and pain have not their usual strength, or become too suddenly suppressed.

During the height of the access, no other applications should be made use of than those I have mentioned, unless newly carded wool be preferred. Towards its decline nothing more should be done, with the exception of friction by means of a brush, if the swelling remain long after the pain. The transpiration should be well

kept up, by covering the whole frame with flannel and very warm clothing, rather tight to the body. The hands and feet should also be protected from damp and cold.

Baths might be considered dangerous, if we are to attach any faith to the old axiom, "Water is poison to gout." Daily observation, however, will convince us of the advantage of general baths, during the intervals of health, either with a little soap, if the patient be strong and vigorous, or simply bathing of the feet, if feeble. During the attack itself, vapour baths, directed to the parts affected, are of great service, if the inflammation, swelling, and pain are too considerable. To reap their good effects, the feet should be placed on one or two sticks across the vessel in which hot water has first been placed. Nevertheless, the feeble and very old should be very cautious in their use, as in many cases they may be injurious.

Cold baths, which many physicians have

recommended to be used during these attacks, might produce the most dangerous effects; and a physician alone would be the proper person to point out the exceptions to this rule. Frequent experience speaks highly in praise of friction, in particular when moderate and applied to the whole surface of the skin. Cases have occurred in which it alone has wrought a cure. Desault cites that of an old man, who, thirty years before his death, cured himself of gout, to which he had previously been very subject, by being rubbed night and morning with the hand covered with a woollen mitten.

The alimentary regimen possesses so many advantages for the gouty, that those who fail in its rules must ever suffer. Indeed their cure must be hopeless without sobriety, which alone, unassisted by medicine, may induce this desirable result. Nothing is a more striking proof of its advantages, than the examples of those who,

once rich, have fallen into indigence, and forced to live soberly, ceased to be tormented by gout. But should they once regain their state of opulence, pain speedily reminds them of their ingratitude to the beneficent rules of frugality. France, during the late Revolution, affords proofs of many such cures. Temperance and sobriety exempt from this malady persons of the lower orders, even where they lead a sedentary life. Indeed, shoemakers and tailors know but little of this inhabitant of palaces and the abodes of the rich and voluptuous. Why are the Mussulmans and the eastern nations so seldom attacked by this malady? Many may attribute it to their use of baths, and to the influence of the climate; but I would ask, whether their habitual sobriety is not more probably the cause of their exemption from its ravages?

We must observe, that persons who eat little and live plainly avoid gouty attacks

for a number of years; but if they indulge in excesses these seizures speedily re-appear, and with so much the more force, from having remained so long in a state of torpor. Too severe diet, on the other hand, would be injurious to feeble weak old persons, unless they had for several years habituated themselves to it. So strict a diet would only suit those who still preserve much strength, and are endowed with an athletic temperament; and even this class should be careful not to adopt this course too suddenly. Sydenham forbids supper; and if the digestion be bad and sluggish, we cannot do better than follow the advice of so great a master. Should this function, on the other hand, be very active, some baked fruits or milk porridge may be allowed at night. When the paroxysm becomes regularly developed, a diluent refreshing diet should be adopted. If the pain be not very great, and the swelling less than usual, it may be attributed

to the invalid's weakness, and a less severe and more restoring diet indulged in.

On the first attack of gout, we should commence by discontinuing all animal food, and especially fat and succulent meats. The preference is to be given to the vegetable world. It alone should be used for nourishment, if the patient enjoy a good constitution, and has preserved a strong stomach. These means, conjointly with milk diet, have frequently cured gout; but this regimen also should be taken to slowly. When too hastily adopted, it would produce inconvenience, and reduce the frame greatly.

When the attack is on its decline, if the stomach be habitually weak, chocolate or aromatic soups may be used to dissipate the languor. During the intervals, temperance should be strictly observed; at the same time bearing in mind, that the old person being almost always weakened by age and his former excesses, cannot submit

to the severity of the regimen of the adult. He may add a little light roast meat, or boiled fish to the vegetables he eats. Some, we have said, will find themselves better for an entirely vegetable regimen. The best nourishment, in such case, will be bread and milk, rice and milk, gruel, and soft vegetables, cooked with very little seasoning; namely, spinach, carrots, turnips, &c.; apples, prunes, all the melting fruits, and strawberries. Linneus declares, that he preserved himself from the return of gout for a length of time, by eating a quantity of strawberries every year. Farinaceous food is to be preferred by those who are lean, and whose digestive organs have still some strength, but should be carefully avoided by the feeble and flatulent. The Salernian school particularly interdicted the use of beans, alleging that unless very tender, they irritate, and even cause gout; "*Manducare fabam caveas, parit illa podagram.*" Cheese is equally

improper, and according to Scaliger, also produces this disorder.

In cases of great weakness, or very advanced age, food of the most restoring or digestive nature, chocolate with vanilla, and soups very moderately seasoned, are to be recommended; but little salt should be taken with the food, which may be seasoned with mustard, garlic, onions and cress.

The use of milk has been greatly praised by some, and far too much decried by others. Taken alone, it might be injurious to weak stomachs, and persons subject to spasms. It sometimes causes weakness, which may be combated successfully by the use of bark wine. It should, however, be persevered in, if this weakness be rather the result of numerous attacks of gout, than of former excesses. It is mild and strengthening, and particularly useful in irregular and long attacks, when added to exercise. Asses milk is the best. Pliny mentions,

that many of the inhabitants of ancient Rome were, by its means alone, cured of gout. The weak should give it the preference. Goats and cows' milk are equally serviceable.

Water is the best drink for most gouty subjects; in particular for the strong and vigorous. It is not so fit for feeble old people; their stomach demands a more generous liquid. Examples may, nevertheless, be cited of several who owed their cure to it alone; and I shall state one, mentioned by Lieutaud:—A gouty person, of sixty years of age, who had abandoned himself to every pleasure, in a lucky moment considered it was time for him to look to the future, and repair, by a life of mortification and penitence, the faults of his youth. With this praise-worthy view, he imposed a very rigid fast on himself, and allowed himself nothing for his nourishment but ripe French beans, without any seasoning, bread and water. His palate,

vitiated by good cheer, at first suffered greatly from the change; his stomach absolutely refused this unwonted nourishment; but nothing daunted, he waited until hunger rendered that sweet enough, which before was detestable to him. He gradually became accustomed to this new regimen, and had eventually the double satisfaction of having quieted the qualms of conscience, and radically cured, without thinking of it, an old and cruel gout; recovering even the use of his hands and feet, as when in the most perfect health.

The reply to the question, whether wine occasions gout, is not easy to answer. People who drink much of it, the inhabitants of Burgundy and Champagne, who sometimes drink it to excess, are seldom affected by it. Experience, however, often proves, that it is generally hurtful to the gouty, especially those amongst them who are strong, robust, and sanguine. If, on the other hand, the gouty person be feeble and

old, his stomach weak, windy and irregular, the attacks of gout ill defined, wine becomes absolutely necessary for him; especially during the attack, when the invalid, greatly enervated, has a habit of using spirituous liquors. It also tends to prevent the frequency of gout in these same persons. In these different cases, stimulating liquors would increase weakness, and add to all the ill effects of the malady.

The best wines are those which contain the least spirit; the sweet Spanish wines, Malaga, Madeira, Canary, Samos, Bourdeaux, and Cahors. Many gouty persons find benefit from mixing with the water they use a fourth or eighth part of Spanish wine. After the remark we have made, that this malady is rare in Champagne, we may recommend the wines of that country to many gouty persons.

The white Rhenish wines, all of which are acid, are injurious. A single glass of them has frequently caused a sudden attack

of gout. But whatever may be the good effects of wine on the gouty, they should be most moderate in its use. If it increase the acidity of the stomach, some weak rum and water is much better.

When the stomach is in a state of torpor, some mild cordials, ferrugineous waters, or a little theriaca, may be added to the wine, either during the attack or after it. Sydenham is much in favour of beer, as well adapted to the gouty, who have still some strength remaining. It frequently prevents passing of blood, very common with the gouty who suffer from calculi in the kidneys. Cyder and perry should be always avoided. Spirituous liquors should be abandoned, unless the habit be of too old standing, too impervious, and the stomach weak. Coffee is more beneficial, especially where the fibres are soft, and the digestion weak. By restoring its energy, this liquor often reconducts the attack to the feet, when it threatened the internal

organs. Tea, which has many adherents, should not be taken by weak persons.

To prevent or remedy costiveness, glysters, with a little salt, oil, and water, may be administered. The invalid should retire to rest early, particularly in Winter, on rather a hard bed. If the sleep be regular he should rise betimes, as lying too long weakens and exhausts. No repose should be taken during the day.

In the decline of gouty attacks, the parts which have been affected should be gently exercised. This will augment the muscular powers, facilitate local circulation, and strengthen the vital functions. It has also the additional advantage of diminishing the extreme nervous mobility, and of greatly mitigating the pain. By general exercise alone, gout, or a return of its attacks, is often prevented; and daily experience proves, that those who take constant bodily exercise are very seldom subject to gout, and indeed it alone has frequently

effected a cure. However, to be efficacious, it should never be violent, inasmuch as it would not be possible to continue it long, and it would not fail to weaken. It should particularly be resorted to after the first attacks. It is less useful, and might even occasion a relapse, if used except when the constitution is enervated. Moderate exercise should, therefore, be attempted every day. Without it, every other mode of cure must be useless; the attacks more severe; and formation of stones in the bladder much more likely.

One of the most efficacious kinds of exercise is riding on horseback; so beneficial are its results, in the opinion of Sydenham, that he goes so far as to declare, that the person who was acquainted with so certain a remedy for the cure of gout, as the constant custom of riding, and would keep it secret, must in a very short time amass great riches. It should be repeated every day. A carriage may be used, if the invalid

cannot mount a horse, and it may occasionally be varied by taking a walk. If the frame be so enfeebled that it cannot take these exercises, the invalid should read aloud, sing or laugh, if possible. These different actions communicate slight movements to the pectoral and abdominal organs, which have a most advantageous influence over their functions. Amusing conversation, which fixes without fatiguing the attention, and occupies the mind agreeably, is also extremely salutary. Nor is music to be forgotten. Without destroying the cause of pain, it produces a forgetfulness of it, and prevents the irritation consequent upon this enemy of human happiness. In pleasing the mind, it causes cessation of spasms, and regulates transpiration. History informs us, that Albert, Duke of Bavaria, suffering cruel torment from gout, found relief alone from the sounds of soft and melodious music.

Sobriety cannot be too strongly obser-

ved. In concert with it, reason forbids late hours, fatiguing and prolonged study, in particular immediately after meals; as also all games which demand too great attention of the mind. The pleasures of love are especially to be abstained from, for they cause spasms, enervate and reduce the strength. Ludwig mentions the cases of gouty men, who having married, and exceeded the laws of moderation with their wives, have contracted serious disorders, or experienced seizures of gout, which speedily carried them off.

Every thing should be avoided which may affect the mind with painful ideas or melancholy sensations. On the other hand, whatever excites contentment, or pleasing emotions of the heart, strengthens the patient, and is of incalculable service. Intense passions, anger, terror, or even joy, on the contrary, frequently render recovery hopeless, increase anguish, and occasionally even cause death. Stahl has seen sud-

den passion produce such violent and prompt attacks of this disorder, that the person affected was unable to move, and obliged to be carried from his chair to bed. Even where these passions are but fictitious and dissembled, they may be productive of the most painful consequences. The celebrated actor, Fleury, was near becoming their victim. Having been for two days suffering from a slight gouty seizure, he received an order to perform in the piece of " Le Mechant," at the palace of St. Cloud, which he could not disobey. He had hardly got through his part before every inflammatory symptom of the disorder had disappeared, he was seized with acute pains in the head, which became enormously swelled and red. He returned immediately to Paris, and evidently must have perished, but for instant and able medical relief. The attention of the mind then should rather be distracted than occupied. By the presence of agreeable and

pleasing ideas, pain appears less formidable and more supportable. But if nothing can eradicate it, if it must be tolerated, let philosophy be called to our aid, and the advice of Seneca remembered. " Think of the noble and virtuous actions you have done; call to mind those which have distinguished others. Let the most courageous of men, those who have achieved the greatest triumphs over pain, be present to your remembrance. Contemplate, for instance, him who, whilst his veins were being opened, continued to read; and him who laughed incessantly, though it only caused his executioners to inflict, with redoubled zeal, the most refined torture. If laughter can thus triumph over pain, cannot reason effect as much? It is not sword in hand, and in the field of battle only, that we can give proofs of invincible courage; we can acquire a title to it, even on our pillows. If you have any thing to occupy your thoughts, struggle against your

malady. If it extracts from you no prayers, no murmurings, you will afford a noble example." Gout does not always regularly appear in the joints of the legs or arms. In the weak and debilitated, the very old, whose stomach has lost all its tone, or those who have constantly abandoned themselves to excess, the gout is little felt in these regions, but more particularly torments the head, chest, and stomach, and not unfrequently causes a fatal termination of the disorder. Every means therefore should be adopted in these cases to recal it to its usual seats; and on this alone the life of the patient, in some degree, depends. Thence, no doubt, the old proverb: "If you have the gout, you are to be pitied; if you have it not, you have much to fear." How many lives, doubtless, have been cut short, from the invincible obstacles which have opposed themselves to the regular development of this disease! How many, on the other hand, have escaped, as by a

miracle, the most painful disorders! Every day we behold asthmatic, dropsical, and feverish persons rid of their sufferings and the cause of their disorder, by the appearance of an attack of gout alone.

The organ most frequently tormented by internal tonic gout is the stomach. In such a case, its functions are generally deranged; the appetite is gone; indigestion frequent; uneasiness, nausea, vomitings, flatulence, acidity and pain in the stomach, cramps in different parts of the body, lowness of spirits, &c., are experienced. Every care must then be taken to renovate the stomachic powers by excellent soups, roast or boiled meat, generous wines and spices.

Exercise in a carriage or on horseback, and friction of the whole body, are most advisable, taking care to avoid cold. The feet should be bathed in a decoction of mustard or salt. Socks of waxed cloth should be applied to them. Antiarthritic soles should be used, which are thus pre-

pared: two pieces of white felt, or of a hat which has not been dyed, should be cut of a proper size, and afterwards steeped in camphorated brandy, sufficiently long to soak them well. The hair or fur of one side should be pulled off, and that side covered with powder of mustard. They ought then to be left to dry in the open air. These soles should be placed under the foot, immediately in contact with the skin, and the whole covered with a flannel sock. They ought to be changed every day *.

Do any particular remedies exist which effect an undoubted cure of gout? Quackery and knavery will answer in the affirmative. In every age they have boasted cures, but such remedies have at length been consigned to oblivion, or condemned as pernicious. They almost always deceive

* Gouty persons of a very advanced age should exercise much discretion in cutting their toe nails and corns. Loubet mentions several cases of gouty persons dying very suddenly after this operation of mortification in the feet.—Loubet's *History of the Gout*, p. 99.

or amuse the patient, or even cause his death, while they promise, and even attempt a perfect, radical, and effectual cure of their painful malady. Truth forces us to confess that no medicines can cure gout; their effects are too momentary to produce the desired change, or bring about so important a result. There are not then, nor can there be remedy or secret for its cure. Twenty centuries since, Lucien established this truth, personifying gout, and making it hold the following discourse with the impostors who boast the possession of secrets which are to eradicate it:—

"Who does not know gout, invincible mother of every pain, born to be the torment of unhappy mortals? Nothing can appease my wrath; neither the blood of victims immolated on my altars; the fumes of incense, nor the richest offerings. All the efforts of Apollo, the physician of the Gods, and those of his son, the learned Esculapius, are vain against me. From the

beginning of time, man has striven to save himself from my anger. Even at the present day he adopts every means to attain this end. He leaves no method untried; he explores every vegetable which covers the earth; he has recourse to the bones, nerves, skin, fat, blood, marrow, milk, and even the excrements of animals. What metal, the juice of what herb, or what gum, does he not make trial of? These persons are but madmen who only irritate my ire; for this reason I treat them without pity; but as for those who do not attempt to undertake this useless warfare against me, to them I am both indulgent and kind."

The medical world itself has sought, in its vast pharmacopœia, some substance which might conquer this malady. Its efforts have been useless. Old books of medicine still, however, contain some of these prescriptions. One of the most celebrated is the Duke of Portland's powder, composed of several bitter vegetables. It

sometimes relieves the stomachic powers; in other cases it may be persevered in for twenty years, without affording any relief. Most commonly it dissipates gout, and speedily conducts to the tomb the unhappy and too confiding patient. Cullen declared in his lectures, that he had known a dozen persons who had taken this bitter powder, and at first with success; but every one of them were dead by the third year, either of dropsy, apoplexy, or palsy. Gaubius cites several instances amongst bilious subjects. M. le Marquis de *****, a man of sixty, subject to gout upwards of thirty years, was in the habit of using bitters in powders and pills. The paroxysms speedily moderated, and became more distant in their intervals. They at last became so slight and short, that he considered himself completely free from this painful disorder; but in proportion as he felt gout less, his breathing became difficult, his heart was attacked with violent spasms,

and death speedily terminated this scene of anguish.

Great encomiums have been bestowed on frequent bleeding, purgatives, and sudorifics. Some medical men, on the other hand, regard them as so many instruments of death; and this is not to be doubted, in the cases of the greater number of old persons.

Most topical applications also are dangerous; very few of them can be employed with success. Of the latter class is bread and milk poultice, which may be applied when the pain is intolerable. It cannot, however, be kept on long without being injurious, as it would weaken and prevent the perfect development of the attack, and the gouty principle would fix itself somewhere else.

In latter times, renown published the marvellous cures brought about by M. Pradier's remedy. Time and experience have already done justice to it. If it some-

times affords relief, it oftener increases the affection. There are now but few physicians who will not confess its inutility, or in many cases its dangerous effects. Professor Hallé, however, seems to have entertained a different opinion. In concluding his report, he lays it down, that " this remedy accelerates the periods and termination of the attacks of acute gout, often soothes its pains very speedily, and favours its development, especially on the joints of the upper and lower extremities. It often puts a stop to the accidents resulting from attacks of wandering gout on the different viscera, and it produces these effects by an irritation acting particularly on the soles of the feet or palms of the hands, or on the neighbouring joints, without altering the texture of the skin."

Although it is necessary that this remedy should be administered with the method and discernment appertaining only to able and observing persons, and although its use

in no wise dispenses with preservative cares and regimen, we shall give its mode of preparation, and the manner of using it.

Take of balm of Mecca, six drachms; red bark one ounce; saffron, half an ounce; sarsaparilla, an ounce; sage, an ounce; rectified alcohol, three ℔s. Dissolve the balm separately, in one-third of the alcohol; steep the other ingredients in the remaining liquid for forty-eight hours. Filter and mix the two liquors for use. The tincture thus obtained is to be diluted with about twice or three times as much lime-water. The bottle must be shaken before it is used, in order to blend the precipitate which is formed.

Manner of using the Remedy.

A linseed poultice is to be prepared and spread very hot, and of about a finger thickness, on a napkin, in order to wrap up the part; this poultice should be very tenacious. Six pounds of linseed meal should be used, when it is intended to

poultice the feet and legs as far as the knees, which is generally the case.

When the poultices are prepared, and as hot as the invalid can bear, about two ounces of the preparation should be poured over each; it is to be spread on the whole poultice placed under the limb, and should cover it completely; the whole should be wrapped in flannels or gummed taffety, to preserve the heat of the dressing, which is kept tight by bandages. This poultice is to be removed every twenty-four hours. The extremities to which it is applied transude a great quantity of serous humour; they fall away considerably; but after the cure of the gout, they speedily recover their fulness.

THE END.